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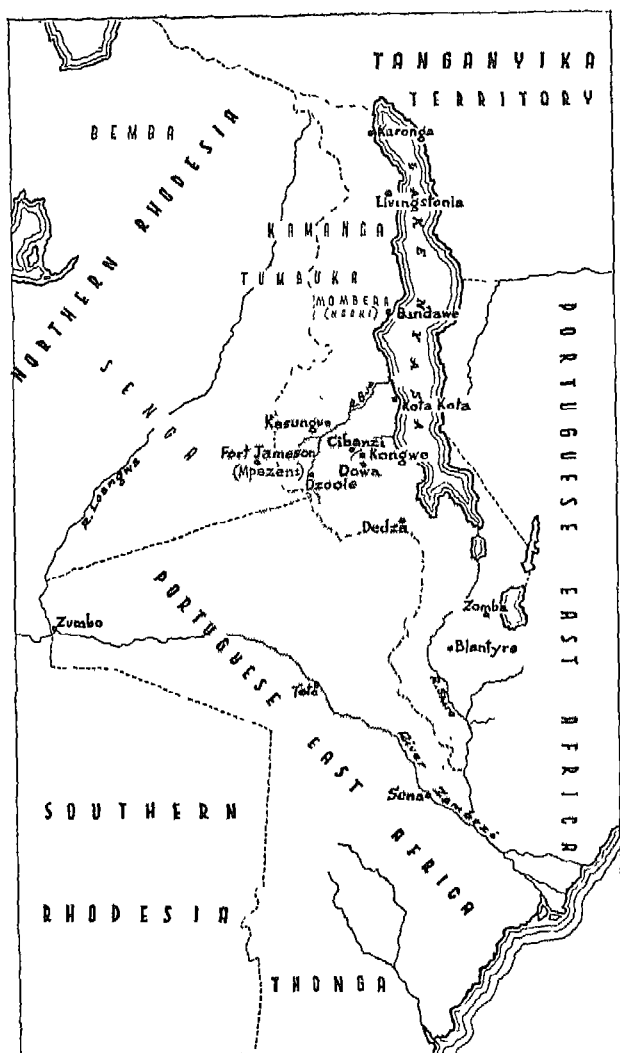
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## II. FADMAN'S ENTERPRISE



# NYASALAND AND SURROUNDING TERRITORIES

*(Shaded area represents a possible approximation to the pre-European "Maravi" country.)*

# HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

*An Unexpected Page in  
Central African History*

Translated and edited  
with a preface  
by

CULLEN YOUNG

From the *Cewa* original by  
S. Y. NTARA  
*Nkhoma ; Nyasaland*



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## DEDICATION

*To the African Men and Women  
whose Loyalty was Shield and Guard  
to their Enterprising Headman as he  
explored New Ways*





## FOREWORD

STORIES written in books have great benefit for people able to read. There are substantial reasons; among them this, that we are enabled to follow the guidance of these stories and gain benefit by them. Note, for example, how if we observe something that makes for increased ability and efficiency, many people will continually be glad therein. If we, therefore, take pleasure in such things in our daily life, can we not give permanence to them by writing of them and by reading about them? Assuredly I think so.

Things so written give us vision as to what lies ahead of us; just as it is in the knowledge of all travelling on a journey that the one in front is constantly bringing things to their notice. At a certain moment he may say, "Oh, I have been pierced by a thorn! Step to this side, the rest of you!" He warns all who come behind him about this thing, and they come safely to the place of their desire.

Thus if we follow reliable records they will aid us in knowing just how we ought to act in order to live well and in order also to be helpful to our fellows. An old proverb<sup>1</sup> of our ancestors says *It is people who make the world; the bush has wounds and scars*. Without other people no one can be happy, no matter what he may meet. He needs people to laugh with, to comment upon his appearance, to join with him in the dance and so on.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the book proverbial wisdom will be, as here, italicized.

## FOREWORD

Here in this book is written the story of a prominent man whose name was Msyamboza. He was born before the Europeans arrived in our land and lived for long after their coming; until his death in the year 1926. If we follow his story carefully we will see both his shortcomings and his greatness. When I personally realized the trend of it I came to believe that it would be of great usefulness among our villages, our home folk and our friends. I am led to trust also that my contemporaries and all you men of the younger generation, all our younger female generation also and our mothers, will rejoice when you read the history of this leader, laid out in proper order.

Had I been entirely alone I could not have followed out all the story from its beginning in a time of darkness over our land right up to the present day when brightness from the unique Book has opened up our land and so shone upon ourselves that we live in freedom and peace. For this reason I here give thanks to those who have helped me; for example to Solomon Masakhumbira who for long companioned Msyamboza, to the honoured woman Sinai who was wife to Msyamboza, and to Akim her son, I say, *May you sleep far from the fire!*<sup>1</sup> Nor can I forget, too, Wilson Shani<sup>2</sup> grandson of Msyamboza, because of all the stories of the older ones which he heard when he was a boy. To my friends Eliah and Timon, and to Headman Mamba of Cibanzi, I also render thanks.

And there is my gratitude to the Leader of our

<sup>1</sup> i.e. May you live free from danger or trouble!

<sup>2</sup> Cewa pronunciation of *Nhlane*, one of the original Nguni (actually amaNtungwa) families from S. Africa; indicating later intermarriage between Ngoni and Cewa.

# FOREWORD

Mission, Mr. J. J. Stegmann, since it was he who asked me to set out this piece of history.

SAMUEL Y. NTARA.

Kongwe Station School,  
Dutch Reformed Church Mission,  
Dowa, Nyasaland  
August 31, 1945.



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN a small Lanarkshire spinning-mill, working at a loom with a book propped up before him, a young Scot is preparing himself for a life-work which will write his name indelibly upon the page of African history. Thousands of miles away, in an unknown village deep in an unexplored continent, an African boy-baby is being born. Up from the South there is approaching a marauding horde thrust forth by the great "killing time" of the 1820's in South Africa, and in November 1835 they will cross the Zambezi and enter the land of that little boy-baby's people, bringing *hfaqane*, dispersion, to a score of peaceful tribes. As if that were not enough to ensure for the baby an eventful life, there are a handful of Portuguese on the middle and lower Zambezi, moving among the villages bartering for men and women slaves, and up from the east coast at Zanzibar and Kilwa Arab caravans have by this time pushed their way inland as far as the great lakes. The stage is set for the human drama in which David Livingstone is cast for leading part. No one, however, until now has even heard of the boy-baby, but it is his story that is given here and its particular interest lies in its filling a gap in the African picture which we had all thought could never now be filled at all.

For this we have to thank Mr. Samuel Ntara, a member of that section of the Nyasaland people among whom the boy-baby was to achieve authority

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and great repute, and from among whose older people our author was able to glean the facts here woven into the story of Msyamboza. I have my own reason for thanking Mr. Ntara, in that he has allowed me to enjoy the fascinating task of presenting in English words—while retaining as far as possible the shape and flavour of the original—a life-story so illuminative from a period hitherto unlit. We have, until now, had no knowledge of the story of south-central Africa as seen through the eyes of the local tribes upon whom Arab, Ngoni and European were to break in during the fateful nineteenth century. We know that as early as 1616 one Portuguese traveller at least had made a journey from the middle Zambezi to the coast at Kilwa and had left on record the names of tribes, one at least of which links up with the story here presented. We know, too, that at the very end of the eighteenth century another Portuguese from the same point on the Zambezi travelled westwards to what is now the south-eastern corner of Belgian Congo and recorded at least two chieftainships of the people among whom Msyamboza nearly a century later was to become a prominent lesser chief. But of how these Nyasaland people thought, felt and acted as disturbers of their peace broke in upon them we have had, until now, no knowledge. It is this which gives special interest to the story of Msyamboza and his section of the *Gewa*<sup>1</sup> people in the Dowa administrative district of Nyasaland.

History behind this south-central African people is obscure in detail but clear enough in broad outline.

<sup>1</sup> In conformity with the now accepted orthography our symbol "c" is here used throughout for "ch".

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At some date considerably earlier than the opening of the seventeenth century, a group under a leader named Mazizi Karonga is known to have moved from north to south down the western shore of Lake Nyasa. Tradition has it that they found no trace of human occupation; nothing but "the tracks of beasts and birds". At a point near the southern boundary of what is now the West Nyasa administrative district Mazizi died, leaving a son named Karonga and a sister's son named Kanyenda. The latter, under matrilineal rule still in force among the *Cewa*, succeeded to the headship and settled near the Dwambazi river where his descendant lives to-day, at Nkhunga, still using as symbol of his chiefship the small iron "stool" which has survived the centuries. His chiefship is over a people named *Tonga* whose speech differs greatly from *ciCewa* though the four leading family names among both are identical.

Karonga, son of Mazizi, continued southward with a portion of the people, and to-day the kinships over a very large area extending beyond the Zambezi in one direction and westwards into what is now Northern Rhodesia in another, are proof both of the length of time which has passed and of the relatively undisturbed conditions prior to the irruption of Arab and Ngoni. There must be some eight or nine now separately labelled peoples in this wide area whose roots lie back among these pre-seventeenth-century incomers. Gaspar Bocarro in 1616 mentions one when he records the *Manganja*<sup>1</sup> on his route, and on

<sup>1</sup> In 1928 the Universities' Mission to Central Africa published a short account of the *Mang'anya* by the Rev. Laurence Cisui as gathered by him from "the elders of the tribe". I do not know of its ever being translated into English, but it agrees with what is



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the same ground to-day as when Bocarro passed; Dr. Lacerda in 1796 records the chieftainships of *Mkanda* and *Mwasi* in the uplands north and north-east of what is now Fort Jameson, and to-day a *Mkanda* and a *Mwasi* are still there, the latter to make several appearances in the pages that here follow. Further references to the wide complex of peoples kin to Msyamboza's *Cewa* will appear in footnotes at relevant points. One further historical reference must, however, be given here.

About 1855, at an early station of the Church Missionary Society in what is now the Kilimanjaro borderland between Kenya and Tanganyika Territory, a missionary caught one day the sound of a strange speech. He found the speaker to be a "*mNiassa* slave" who, on being interrogated, said that he had been taken by the slavers from the "*Maravi*" country on the high hills west of the southern end of Lake Nyasa. The missionary (a German named Rebmann) compiled a dictionary of the strange speech and it is largely *ciCewa*; Msyamboza's speech. The hill country described as "*Maravi*", or part of *Maravi*, is Msyamboza's country, or the area immediately adjoining it to the south, and is referred to in these pages more than once. It seems fairly clear that one hundred years ago our Southern Nyasaland and adjoining areas did carry a population composed in

here given in so far as original northern home is concerned. It goes, however, into such detail as to route—from "the Lake known as Sahara Desert", through "Timbukutu", Sokoto, Urangi, Kongo, Urua, Lake Moero, Bangweolo; at which last point a breaking-up took place—as to make one wonder just how far this is all folk-memory gathered from the elders! It confirms the title "*Karonga*" for the people's leader with the personal name *Culongola Mpili*, i.e. *Phuri*, as found to-day.

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considerable part of peoples having a shared hereditary core. That section among whom Europeans first settled was occupied by those known as "people of the Lake", *aNyanja*, and their speech, *ciNyanja*, achieved premier status as a name because the Europeans found it to be widely understood throughout the areas of early travel and settlement. But the people up on the hills, speaking—with local variations—the same language, were known as *aGewa* (meaning unknown) and *aGipeta* (meaning, "people of the long-grass lands") and not only these three groups but others also were linked by this form of speech as well as by kinships running through at least four main families. It is this widespread "family" of peoples that inhabited the area called "*Maravi*"; and—as will be noted from the biography—the authority flowing through Karonga, son of Mazizi, and subsequent inheritors of the ancient name, was recognized among all these sections southward from Kanyenda's now quite distinct area in West Nyasa.

Rebmann's chance discovery at Kilimanjaro some ninety years ago bears directly upon Msyamboza's area, upon its contacts with the Coast trade in slaves and upon the speech of its people. Incidentally it may be mentioned that when a union version of the *ciNyanja* New Testament was required, the work was entrusted to the head of the Dutch South African Mission whose entry into Msyamboza's life and that of his people is dealt with in later pages here, and a criticism of the work from some who only knew the language from experience of one area, was, "There is too much *Gewa* in it"! Whether "*Gewa*" has title on the score of age to be the name for people and speech

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over the much wider area we do not know; what is important to realize is that just as Devon speech differs from Durham and yet both are *English*, so does *Cewa* differ from *Nyanja* and yet both are, shall we say, *Maravi*.

But the status given to "*ciNyanja*" has brought it within the list of principal languages recognized by the International African Institute for its Essay Prize Scheme. Under this scheme, some fourteen years ago, our author, Mr. Samuel Ntara, submitted in *Cewa* an imaginary biography of a man of his people, born and living under matrilineal conditions. This was awarded a prize and is available in English as *Man of Africa*. It is a very useful companion volume to the story now of Msyamboza, as also is the recently published *Our African Way of Life*, essays submitted for the Prize Scheme of a later year by three Nyasalanders belonging to widely differing areas yet all using this common tongue.<sup>1</sup> Frequent allusion in the story of Msyamboza to ceremonies attending, for example, mourning and girls' coming-of-age, is explained by material contained in the second of these, and I have here confined to brief footnotes such brief explanation as is necessary if Msyamboza's decisions and actions are to be understood.

As to Msyamboza himself, the main facts seem to be these. While little more than a youth, the group to which he belonged moved back into central Nyasaland from some point in "*Maravi*" which, from the time taken on the journey, must have been at least as far southwards as the valley of the Zambezi. This

<sup>1</sup> Both books published by United Society for Christian Literature (Lutterworth Press), 5/- net.

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group was under Mamba Nkhoma—Nkhoma being one of the leading Maravi and Tonga family names—and Msyamboza, whose father's name was Kankhungu, was sister's-son to Mamba. This return northwards followed an earlier similar move by a chief named Dzooli whose successor of to-day is still prominent in the Dowa administrative district. The date of Mamba's move must be, I think, in the 1840's, while the South African Ngoni were not yet returned from their farthest north settlement at the south end of Tanganyika, to which point they had slowly advanced after crossing the Zambezi<sup>1</sup> near Zumbo in 1835. As to the date of Msyamboza's birth we have the story which he tells to his young people of a journey taken while "still a small boy to the country of the Bemba". We have, so far as I know, no evidence when the Arabs first penetrated between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa, though we do know from Livingstone that in the 1860's they were raiding and devastating there. A journey into Bemba country which lies west of the great Lakes—and one in which a young boy could take part—must have meant conditions of relative tranquillity compared with those ruling from at least 1845 onwards when the Ngoni certainly, and the Arabs possibly, were creating havoc. That he was a great traveller is clear from our story, and in addition to what is here told we know from his family that he paid at least one visit to the Coast and spoke on his return of a Sultan Saidi who may well be Sayid Barghash of Zanzibar.

I therefore place Msyamboza's birth at about

<sup>1</sup> The usual spelling is followed here but it is to be noted that Africans themselves say *Zembezi*.

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1830. He died in 1926 "more than ninety years old" in the judgment of those who knew him, and all available data in the story clearly confirm such an estimate. Nor is such an age anything to be wondered at though amazingly ill-informed statements as to African age are still made with the greatest assurance. An excellent example occurred a few years back when Sir Ernest Graham-Little, in the *Times*, put himself on record that "senility in the African might be expected at any age after thirty-five years" and that a certain medical man after some 2,000 *post mortems* had found that "no individual had reached the age of sixty". He was replied to, briefly, as follows:

In the part of East Africa I know, few individuals in average health begin to look at all elderly under 40, and among men doing ordinary portage or general work there are very many between 50 and 60. I stayed among a certain people for twenty-one years and spent half of each year travelling. I discovered half a dozen of my carriers who were not merely alive at the time of a certain historical episode in 1880 but had been old enough to be in the youngest of the fighting companies concerned in the episode. That would make them 16-18 years old in 1880 and 67-69 when they last carried for me in 1931. In the villages men and women of over 80 are numerous (though fewer women than men) and I have had personal acquaintances whose memories carried back to well-known Arab and other events of more than ninety years ago.

That Msyamboza was a man of great originality and intelligence is clear from the story here told. Let it speak for itself. It will not easily fit wholly into a prevalent theory that individualism, initiative and experimentation are impossible within the early com-

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munal groups, however true it may be that these traits may, and do, bring suspicion as a rule upon the gifted or unusual person. That Msyamboza came successfully through this difficulty and in that period of his life before any European influence had appeared upon the scene, gives this book a large part of its interest. That it also shows something of how the African himself regarded the slave-trade and the slaver is a point of considerable interest also.

One disappointment, indeed mystification, comes from the fact that at no point, apparently, did Msyamboza have any contact with David Livingstone. This is the more puzzling since the explorer certainly was in his neighbourhood in the 1860's. It is, however, quite possible—since Livingstone's records speak at that time of little but the havoc of *Mazitu* (Ngoni) war parties—that he was in Msyamboza's neighbourhood just at the time when Mamba, Msyamboza and all their people were in refuge with chief Mwase at Kasungu, as told in Part One, Chapter Two. Msyamboza's people, however, say that he did hear of a white man at that time from people whom he met when on a visit down at the Lake.

Accurate detail in a story such as this is of relatively minor importance. Indeed Mr. Ntara's picture is not one of accurate line-drawing; it is impressionistic and very successfully so. It is satisfactory to know that there is an intention to publish his book in Nyasaland in its *Cewa* original. It should do much to set a standard of vernacular literary style, being extremely carefully composed and yet with all the flexibility of the spoken narrative. We who are not of his own people owe him a great debt, and in the years to come

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among his own people, too, his name will be held in very high regard.

CULLEN YOUNG.

Midcalder,  
Midlothian.  
February, 1947.

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## PART ONE

### Chapter One

#### ORIGIN

**M**SYAMBOZA, first of the name, was a far-famed headman years ago at Cibanzi. His maternal uncle was Mamba, a powerful chief, but because of intelligence and the things he did Msyamboza attained wider repute and came to be counted also as a chief in the community so that even until to-day the name is carried on. The Msyamboza of our time is third in the name.

He was a man of the Cewa people. His ancestors came from the direction of the sea long ago and entered the land lying to the west of Lake Nyasa, a good land, level and of great extent where was excellent fertility for the production of food crops.

His mother's home was at Mankhamba; the village out of which she came was called Themba. Mankhamba is an area near Citipi in the Malawi country. The older generations had lived for many years there and on migrating thence they were known as Cewa. They lived there in communities according to their kinship. The Phiri family were by themselves, the Banda also under their Banda headman; and others also, such as the Cibwe, the Nkhoma and so on, occupied each their separate places.

Mamba belonged to the Nkhoma family but there

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where they were living it was one, Mgawi,<sup>1</sup> who allocated lands. It was he who saw to division of lands for all, the great chief Karonga having sent him to carry out this duty. There was another well-known chief, in the kinship of the Mwale, whose name was Dzoole. There, where they lived, they were friendly; there was free intercourse among all, and inter-marriage. Men of Dzoole's Mwale group began to take wives to themselves from Mamba's Nkhoma group, and the chiefs themselves were on the best of terms because of this their inter-relationship.

What then did they do when they multiplied there at Marawi? Dzoole went out with his people, heading westwards, and entered into unknown territory, excellent land empty of people. It is related that they found some dwarf people, very timorous; and that it is not known whither they fled. Dzoole took all that land for his own. He built his principal village at Mindolera, made a very strong protecting enclosure, settled down with his lesser headmen and hoed food grounds.

Later Mamba told his people that they, too, should go and live beside their relative Dzoole.

"He will not be in any doubt as to where *we* have come from," he said, "but will receive us well."

Mamba's people agreed, saying:

"Let us go, then, there is nothing to cause him trouble."

And they took their journey, travelling by easy stages and halting here and there. At one place they would remain for a couple of years, at another for a

<sup>1</sup> *Mgawi* means A Divider—and this may have been an official title rather than a name

## ORIGIN

single year, in order always to have food. Travelling thus, they arrived at Mikuti.

When they reached Mikuti Mamba said:

"We know that loitering or dallying is bad as a rule, but, on occasion, may be all right. Here this land attracts me greatly. Look at the beauty of it! Its grass and likewise its reeds, all giving a man assurance that he may plant maize and garner it in quantity like unto the number of the sons of men. Now, I say, Come let us enjoy ourselves and have a good time while we stay for a year or two here."

Then all his men and women agreed to live at Mikuti and there for a number of years they remained.

While at Mikuti there was born in the family of one Kankhungu a strong and healthy child to whom was given the name Katunga. This is the Msyamboza of whom I write.

During this period the people found much to eat; millet and maize and beans in quantity. The days passed into years, but a year came with that dreadful thing, famine. Sufficient food was not found and Mamba called his people together, saying:

"Forgive me! It will be the end of us if we remain here. Let us go on to Dzoole. Hunger will scatter us as the winds strip off the leaves and we are alone here; without also any safeguard should an enemy come."

And all consented. They pulled down their huts, burned certain things and set out to reach Mndolera.

At this stage Msyamboza had reached full boyhood and was a lad of real intelligence.

When Dzoole saw Mamba he rejoiced greatly. He said.

"My relative! My cousin! remain here and hoe

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wherever you wish. You and I will eat together and together in happiness will share our beer."

Mamba was glad indeed to see that he had got a little place of his own set aside for him and allowing him and all his folk to settle down to work.

## Chapter 'Two

### WHAT BEFELL AT MNDOLERA

EVERYBODY, as we are constantly observing, has some thing or some occupation of which he is fond, according to the way in which God has made him. In Msyamboza's case we find that from youth he was fond of shaping and carving things of one kind and another. Not that anything forced him to do this but just that he was able to take a lead in work of this sort when playing with his companions

Right at the beginning he said:

"What I want is to learn how to carve hoe handles so as to be able to buy fowls for myself, because I want eventually to own many fowls and, should travelling strangers come, be always sure of seeing tasty food."

When a companion said:

"What about an adze? Where will you find that? Have you already hammered one out?"

*Msyamboza replied:*

"I shall borrow from my uncle Mamba, since he has many."

And when they had finished talking he went to Mamba and begged an adze to shape hoe-handles.

"Very good indeed," said the chief, "don't blunt the edge, though; I am fond of this one."

So Msyamboza came back with the adze and made arrangements for cutting handles.

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First he wanted to cut a *mwinbe* tree, but his companion said:

"This wood can't be used for handles because it is too soft and flexible; it is fit for shaping spoons only, or such like, but not hoe handles. Good handles are found from the *kamphoni*, or the *mtowo*, or the *naphim*: there are also a number of others."

"Is that true?" said Msyamboza, "but the *muwanga* (iron wood) excels in hardness, and to shape it should be to produce a handle that would make a good working hoe!"

But the friend disagreed. "One does not shape handles from *muwanga*; it is much too stiff; for the large wooden hoe itself, however, it is all right."

So they cut the trees when they got to the place and brought the wood home, where he set to until he was able to carve proper handles. Then he began to learn to shape spoons, sticks for stirring porridge, large wooden hoes, knife-sheaths, and these he used to purchase fowls. They made him wealthy, and with these fowls he was able to barter for such other things as he desired. Mamba was very fond of him and looked forward to his becoming a great man.

At that time, too, he became betrothed and married. All the people held them in respect.

Then came a day on which he had gone in search of timber and terrifying news arrived. What was it? They heard that an Ngoni war party had surrounded Dzoolé's strong place at Mindolera.<sup>1</sup> Msyamboza and his companions hurried back to their village in dread and found all in grief. All the men got ready their

<sup>1</sup> This must be about 1855 or so, the approximate date of Ngoni settlement in this particular area.

## WHAT BEFELL AT MNDOLERA

bows and arrows and prepared the poisons with which they smeared the arrows so that when they wounded anyone he would quickly die. Then came the word "Let us go; we will aid our superior though our enemy may finish us and kill us."

All, including Msyamboza, set off to fight and came to blows with the Ngoni, but the war party was strong and broke Dzoole's defences so that he and his people had to flee to Chief Cinganyama (one of their kin) at Cirwa, where they came safe, since the Ngoni did not follow them. They were not equal to the defences at Cinganyama's which were very strong. Indeed his *linga* is commemorated through all Nyasaland in the song that is used at dances:

"Let us see the strong fort, Ho!  
The fort of Cinganyama!"

But alas! What happened to Msyamboza at this evil moment? He and his uncle took their decision.

"Whither shall *we* flee? There is no way open for us to Cinganyama. To remain here without any to aid us is impossible. What shall we do?"

And Mamba said: "Come on! Let us flee to Kasungu, to the great chief Mwase, and so be able to return from there when this danger of war is over; we may be able to preserve our children."

So they left quickly, got their children and wives and cleared off for Kasungu. They even managed to get their animals away and some food.

When they got to Kasungu, Mwase<sup>1</sup> received them

<sup>1</sup> One of the great Cewa names, see Preface. His successor of to-day was brought to Britain some ten years ago by Government in order to widen his experience and fit him for responsible position under Indirect Rule.



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and gave them a place to live in so long as the danger remained in their own area. There for a considerable time they lived, though in some peril because there are many lions at Kasungu; leopards also and hyenas as plentiful as goats, so that ever and again their herds were ravaged by these wild beasts. But after a year or two there, the news spread that the Ngoni had ceased raiding in the Mndolera area, that Dzoole had returned to his village, and that his people were hoeing again and enjoying their beer in peace.

Msyamboza and Mamba, therefore, agreed that they should now return to their own land and set to work getting all their possessions ready; their pounding mortars, pestles, baskets, sifting trays made of reed which have so many names according to the fashion of their plating. They took also flour and relishes carried in packets tied in leaves, beans also and other foods; along with seed for the planting when they got home.

It was a big company of travellers that set out and they moved slowly with the little children, but when they arrived at Mndolera they saw again their deserted sites and commenced at once to build new homes.

## Chapter Three

### MSYAMBOZA TAKES UP HUNTING

EVERYTHING that exists has a mother-cause behind it. If your neighbour, therefore, falls into good fortune, you should not oppose him but let him be, saying to yourself, "I also, one day, will find my chance."

Dzoole found no one among all his own community so keen and so much to his liking as the young Msyamboza and, because of this, he one day called him, and asked: "Can you hunt, or are you one of those who cannot be bothered with trudging about?"

Said Msyamboza: "Hla! What a question, Chief! That is the very job for me. I never slack about but am always after rabbits, or cane-rats, or bush rats."

"Do you understand a gun?" said Dzoole.

"I covet nothing so much," answered Msyamboza, "though, indeed, I do not understand it. I want to be able, so that I may kill beasts for you to eat. How can *you* run about when you find it impossible to get in at the door of any hut that is small and even find yourself hard put to it to turn round! I will quickly manage to become a hunter. Let me have the gun!"

Dzoole, since he was distinctly fat, laughed as he replied:

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

"You have said it indeed! I will lend you the gun so that you may kill game for me as it is obvious that you have plenty of assurance."

Then he called and sent for the gun and handed it to Msyamboza, saying:

"Take it; I bought it with slaves from the Arabs; look after it well and don't in any way damage it."

And did not Msyamboza rejoice! He went off with it to his home and showed it to his people and to his wife. The very next day at dawn he was off to learn how to shoot. He had powder and bullets, and as he went along he saw a bird of some size. He aimed as they had told him previously and shot the bird. He rushed forward and seized it by the neck, all excitement; and then went straight to Dzoole to show it off exultingly:

"Ha! I can do it; now I really go into the bush and do proper hunting."

And from that day forward he hardly missed a day without killing game of some sort. eland or buffalo, little oribi or even huge elephant.

When he killed his first elephant he was astounded. As the people started cutting it up they heard a terrifying sort of rumbling sound and every one, men as well as women, ran away. They had not learned that always when an elephant is disembowelled people feel like fleeing because of the stomach sounds and groans. But when the rumbling ceased they all came back and got on with the cutting up amid great rejoicing.

Msyamboza's heart was completely captured by this hunting. Day after day he went off and came back to Dzoole with meat. He had great praise from

all and they gave him another wife. But one day a senior man went to Dzoole and said:

"Many people are laughing at you, Chief, because you, Dzoole, are acting as if your wisdom is dead. How comes it that you are so lacking in astuteness as to cause honour and wealth to fall upon mere nobodies, people of no standing? Why did you take a gun and give it to the nephew of that Mamba? Do you not know that another man's nephew, so far as you are concerned, is no more than maize-husk, never one to choose as a partner? Have you no one of your own people that you could send out to hunt? You are foolish. The day will come when you will find that you have caused whispering in the corners! You should at once take your gun back. Don't throw away what is yours!"

Said Dzoole: "Ha! I have indeed been a fool. Another man's nephew is truly just like maize-husk. Go and call him there at Mamba's village. Don't speak many words but just say that he must come with the gun that the owner may see it"

What the man replied was. "You must not say to anyone that it was I who told you."

When Msyamboza came Dzoole said:

"I have called you but not for any great matter or because of any dispute. I want to look after the gun myself because my nephews are continually bothering me to learn hunting as you have been able to do. I have it in mind that if you fell ill, who would go out hunting?"

Msyamboza was stricken with sorrow for the gun but because there was no way in which he could avoid consent he handed it over.

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

"Very well," he said. But when he had given it up he went to his uncle Mamba, saying:

"You may think you have something, but if it belongs to another you deceive yourself.<sup>1</sup> Dzoole has taken back his gun."

"Why," asked Mamba, "did he take back the gun he had handed over to you?"

"He said that he wished his nephews to kill game for him," replied Msyamboza

"The man is a fool," said Mamba. "Has he only discovered these nephews to-day, since he did not give it to them before? Why did he ever lend it to you?"

"Probably it is a matter of jealousy," said Msyamboza; "my own thought is that someone put him up to it."

"People will think that a gun can kill game by itself, apart from a man! Who is there at his place who has the perseverance and experience for constant bush-work? He just wants it to lie among the rats. Do not grieve, nephew! Let him take back his gun; people do not see eye to eye at all times!"

So when he went to his hut Msyamboza took his hoe and his axe and told his wife that he was going to look for the medicine that heals swellings, about which a friend had told him. But when he saw the *mtowo* wood, so good and smooth, and dug down to the roots, he realized that it would make excellent knobkerries for killing rabbits. He dug out three and took them home, where he smoothed them properly with his knife until they were just perfect.

<sup>1</sup> *Lat. Thing of an owner is the owner's; don't tie it in your loin-cloth; i.e. where you secrete valuables.*

#### MSYAMBOZA TAKES UP HUNTING

After that he prepared the medicine he had spoken of, pounding it on a stool, making a smooth paste and tying it up in a package before putting it away in the roof-thatch, so that if anyone suffered from swellings he would make the incisions and cause the swellings to cease.

## Chapter Four

### HE RECEIVES THE NAME "SULAMOYO"

MSYAMBOZA did not take things lying down. Anyone accustomed to an energetic life gets stiff in the joints if he does nothing. Thus he got a friend to accompany him into the bush, and when the friend asked what they would be after out there in the rough country, he said:

"I wish to prepare charcoal because I need to forge a hunting knife. I want a really big one, more a sword than just a knife."

So the pair of them went off and cut down *masuku* (bush-plum) trees which they fired according to custom, returning home in the evening when the charcoal had cooled off.

Not a day passed but Msyamboza killed much game with his knobkerries, from rabbits and oribi to bush-buck, reed-buck and others, together with guinea fowl and francolin. He killed all with his clubs. Any traveller coming to the home of Msyamboza never tasted merely vegetable relish but always meat of some sort. But now he got down to the forging of knives—he made a lot of them—axes, large and small, arrows and razors; he also forged one very large knife fit for the killing of elephant. A knife such as he made was really remarkable and a cause of wonder. He made first a blade of about the length of a man's forearm, not very long, and then he fastened it to a short





but bulky wooden haft. What he had in mind was the killing of elephant by getting up trees above their beaten paths. As one passed below he would thrust this weighty weapon into its back. The knife would not leave the elephant's body until it died. He himself, the maker of the weapon, would just follow it up though it took two or more days before it died.

Having made the weapon, the day came to go and lie in wait for the elephant, and on that very day he saw a very large one and pierced it through the back with his sword-knife. Having done this he raced off to the village to tell the people. At dawn many started out to follow up the spoor and came on an elephant at the point of death in thick bush which was nearby. Everyone at the village heard the news and came with their wooden platters, along with wives and children, to see the animal and carry away meat. So strong was the desire for meat that mouths ran with saliva, and as some soon got fires going, the smell of roasting meat filled the air.

Many started to get the skin off, and then there was the cutting of the meat into strips to be given to the women and children and laid together; each household putting its share of meat in one place. All brought flour and their cooking pots and dishes for relish so as to remain there during the time necessary for the proper drying of the meat according to their methods. While the work of disembowelling was not yet started, everyone had been warned. Once it had begun many got right inside and set to work hacking off the meat, because the flesh of the internal organs is considered more tender than the outside. Those people who were inside were, of course, drenched in

#### HE RECEIVES THE NAME "SULAMOYO"

the blood of the animal, and some of them slashed each other without knowing it.

They remained three days there after the cutting-up was finished, in order that the meat might dry and be *light to carry*. Dzoole, as *master of the land*, was apportioned the tusks, but one of them was granted to Msyamboza. They ate the meat for many months. Many praised the meat from the trunk and from the foot, considering this to be the best meat of all.

Msyamboza went on with his hunting and killed both ordinary game in plenty and elephants too. One day he was summoned by Dzoole. When he came, Dzoole said:

"I hear that you are killing much game. How do you do it without a gun?"

Said Msyamboza: "It is said that the maimed man is the wise man. In my wisdom I forged a great short sword and I inserted it in a short wooden haft and am able to thrust it into the back of any elephant. If I can do that it surely dies "

"Is that how you kill elephant?" said Dzoole. "Ha! You are a marvellous fellow; let your name be *Sulamoyo*" (i.e. the hammerer of life).

From that time Msyamboza was much renowned and was called *Sulamoyo* because he hammered out the life of the beasts that he killed. Many ceased to call him by his early name Katunga, using *Sulamoyo* instead. And even Mamba began to vaunt himself on account of this, his sister's son.

## Chapter Five

### A CIKUNDA GUN AND CIKUNDA NAME

GOOD fortune will seek you out; things happen by Glaws of their own. On a certain day some were warming themselves at a fire when they happened to see travellers with small white caps on their heads. Looking carefully they recognized slavers<sup>1</sup> on their travels for the purchase of people in this area.

The slavers came right up to the men's place and commenced to speak of the goods they had to bargain with. Certain of the villagers called up serfs that they had and sold them to the traders. Some demanded cloth but Msyamboza said:

"My friend, will you trade that gun?"

"This gun which I have with me now is not for sale," said the slaver, "just for carrying on the journey in case one might meet hyenas or lions and have to shoot. Possibly on another trip we will come here again and bring guns for you to buy. What do you say to hoes, or beads and cloth? Look out some people that you may sell in exchange for these."

"Hoes and that sort of thing," said Msyamboza, "I do not want. What I do want is that you sell me this gun because the animals here are so numerous that they damage our food crops."

<sup>1</sup> *Aluya*: this is the word elsewhere translated "Arabs", but here, since not always pure Arabs were concerned in all the slaving gangs which moved about through the country wearing the white Arab skull cap peculiar to the Coast man, the general term "slavers" is used.

## A CIKUNDA GUN AND CIKUNDA NAME

And after a long time of bargaining the slaver consented to sell him the gun.

Having bought it, Msyamboza was overjoyed. He named it *Ginyampheta* ("My beautiful lady bird"). And so, what now? Great fortune had found him. The chance to buy this gun was for him an immense event. He outdid himself in hunting; from earliest dawn right up to the last of the light. And one day as the sun was setting it was noted that a wonderful red-gold filled the sky, but Msyamboza, sitting before his hut, was unaware of what the day would bring to him. He had, however, the feeling as if he were going to receive something because one of his eyes had been watering badly and the palms of his hands were itchy.

And then three unknown men came up to his door and asked where the headman's house was.

"I am he whom you seek," said Msyamboza. "What about yourselves? Whence do you come?"

"We come from Jumbe's, at Kota Kota,"<sup>1</sup> replied one of them. "That is where we had reached, though our own country is on the Zambezi and we have spent three years in this territory."

"Have you," asked Msyamboza, "any skilled hunters in your country, who might come here and help us kill the animals?"

"We ourselves," replied the man, "are professional hunters such as you refer to. The purpose of our coming here was to kill animals; look at this bundle of our guns!"

<sup>1</sup> *Kota Kota* On the western shore of Lake Nyasa towards the south end. One of the three great slaving depôts on the Lake; under semi-Arab rule by a *Jumbe*, whose successors were retained in titular office later by Government.

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

"Who are you and what are your names?" said Msyamboza.

"My name," replied the man, "is Canzenza; this one is Mkwanganula, and there is this other one, that's all; three of us."

"Well," said Msyamboza, "the spirits have this day come down in friendship! Here am I constantly longing for hunters to help me and to-day I have found them. Do not think of leaving this village; if you want wives we will give them to you; they are here!"

Said the man: "We would like just that. If you will give us huts we will rejoice to hunt, early or late." And they were as good as their word, for all of them took wives there in the village and died there, leaving children behind them.

Thus these men of the Cikunda tribe became members of the community and began to teach Msyamboza the proper ways of killing game. And he developed into a "professional" hunter through learning this and that about animals from the Cikunda which he had not known before. Indeed he outdid them through his intelligence and his ready resourcefulness.

There came a day when they had all been out after game and had returned after killing some. However, before they had really rested, Msyamboza said:

"Come on! Let us go out again."

Canzenza said: "We are weary, let us rest; see! they have put the pot on the fire for us to cook us food."

But Msyamboza said: "I'm dead with hunger this very moment, but what about feeding in the evening? I'm off by myself! You eat the food and stuff your-

selves full. I will find you here later. Let my wives know to have food ready for me "

And all the Cikunda were astounded at Msyamboza; so much so that when he returned they said:

"You are not Sulamoyo now, but Msiya-mboza" (or, just put shortly, *Msyamboza*). And Canzenza opened out for him the meaning of the phrase by saying:

"In the Cikunda speech *Mboza* means food: *Kusiya* means much as it does with you (i.e. *to leave behind*). Thus because you left your food behind you are Msyamboza."

Msyamboza just laughed and went to his hut where he told his wife that those Cikunda whom they now had amongst them said he was "The man who leaves his food behind".

The wife joined in his laughter and said:

"Just so! They're right in that," and from this time the name of Msyamboza began to take precedence and gain renown right up to his death. In these very days even of the present time, each one entering upon this chieftainship is titled under this name.

## Chapter Six

### CONCERNING CIWERE 'THE NGONI

DAYS are not all good; some are not what one would wish because of what happens in them. And so it fell out on a certain day, when the sun was high above the trees and the senior men were sitting in the shade while the women sifted their flour in the veranda sheds, Msyamboza was enjoying snuff, as was his wont.

But suddenly! A man is seen; mouth gaping; sweat running like water; teeth dry and parched; he stumbles and sinks to the ground.

"Ha!" said Msyamboza. "What have you to say, coming with eyes starting out of your face? Where you have come from is there peace or is there evil?"

"War!" gasped the man, "war has come on us!"

"Oh!" said everyone. "Tell all! Fully!"

"It is the war party of Ciwere,"<sup>1</sup> replied the man. "It has come to Mtumba and Chief Dzoole is already badly shaken; he is crying for help. It is he who has sent me. He said, 'Go to Mamba's and call Msyamboza to come with his gun and aid me in the fighting because it goes hard with me.'"

"So, so," said Msyamboza, "is that how it is? And

<sup>1</sup> *Ciwere*: One of the Ngoni leaders, actually a Senga semi-Ngoni sub-chief, who broke away from the Ngoni near the south end of Tanganyika and preceded their move back from there into N. Nyasaland about 1855. He settled in the Dowa District of Central Nyasaland and assumed overlordship in the Cewa area about the middle of the nineteenth century.

## CONCERNING CIWERE THE NGONI

to-day their name will be mud!<sup>1</sup> They don't imagine that they trod us under in that other fighting, do they? Well; to-day we'll see! Come on! Let us be off!" And he took his gun from the hut and set off running to Dzoole's, arriving breathless.

Dzoole laid out before him the whole story of the fighting and gave him a number of men to accompany him to Mtumba. Arrived there, he found Ciwere's *impi* to be very strong and began to shoot, killing many of the enemy. Only a certain number got away by running; there were wounded and those exhausted through hunger. Msyamboza cut off their heads and gave them to be carried by the men who had accompanied him, together with the shields of the Ngoni and their weapons. When they got back to Dzoole's, he rejoiced greatly over Msyamboza and praised him to the skies, giving him a wife.

Msyamboza himself also rejoiced to receive such honour because of his fighting prowess and Dzoole gave him another name, that of *Kanyamula*. "Because," he said, "you have carried the heads of those people." Thus, while some called him Kanyamula others used the name Msyamboza, but it was the name Msyamboza which was most used.

The fighting being ended, Dzoole and Msyamboza divided the shields and weapons of the Ngoni taking farewell of each other, and, Msyamboza returned home to Mamba's. Constantly thereafter he carried an Ngoni shield everywhere he went and began to be a man of whom all had dread. One day, having gone out into the bush hunting, he met two men out on their own affairs and said to them:

<sup>1</sup> The exact Cewa phrase.



## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

"What village are you from?"

One of them replied: "What about yourself? Where are you from, speaking to us like that? Do you not know that we all come here to look after our own affairs, just as you yourself do?"

"What do you mean, starting to give me impertinence?" said Msyamboza.

"Who is the impertinent one if not you?" replied the other.

"Ho! to-day you die; death right here," retorted Msyamboza.

"You! talk of death to us! Come on, then, let us fight!" was the reply.

Whereupon they set to in rage and Msyamboza killed the two of them single-handed.

Back at the village he told all about it in glee, saying:

"I have just killed two men who were cutting trees for huts;" and everyone praised him admiringly, saying:

"A chief of this sort is good; one that can protect his people. 'Truly no enemy will trouble us!' And noting how people greatly praised him, Msyamboza began to kill people of other communities stealthily by night, making war by himself as it were, and killing many. Among his own community every one obeyed his lightest word and never argued with him or contradicted him. If he wished to issue any command he always stood by night upon an ant-hill, speaking thus:

"Listen everyone! Silence all of you! To-morrow you will hoe my food grounds for me! Every one of you to-morrow to the hoeing!"

## Chapter Seven

### SETTLEMENT AT CIBANZI

IT is constantly being noted that many people have a way of moving their habitation from place to place. There are various sorts of reasons; thus some people may stay just where they are or may build makeshift huts without actually removing; having no desire for another area.

Msyamboza one day was speaking with Mamba and said:

"Let us move; let us get away out of here and settle somewhere else where we shall fire and clear bush-ground for ourselves nicely. It is perfectly true that Dzoole has looked after us well but we really ought to settle now in a place of our own "

"Consider," replied Mamba, "how I'm a man growing frail; my strength is not as it was. What you desire to do, do; but as a matter of right formality, keep me informed. In any doings touching disputes or the making of new laws you should act by yourself. As you have considered the matter and your desire is to go out from here, then I give my entire consent."

"I am glad," said Msyamboza, "to find that you give me your agreement for removal. True it is that lying in one place makes the maize cobs rot. Though a man may say that he sits here little more than a stripped cob he does not know where the gathering

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and carrying away will be. To-morrow I go to Dzoole to ask of him some land."

So when the sun had warmed up a little in the morning he took his way to Dzoole's and found him sitting at the door of his hut enjoying the warmth. The greetings over, Msyamboza said:

"As to the reason for coming here at an early hour such as this, the fact is that at our village there is expansion and the place is too small for us. So in discussion with my uncle Mamba it is agreed that we look for a place apart, by ourselves, so that we may have our own ceremonies<sup>1</sup> and the drums may beat at our village; that also we may enjoy the flesh of game when we have fired our bit of country. Thus it was that Mamba said there was no sin in asking; *one who asks won't have his cloth torn, or go in rags*. This, then, is what we have to say!"

Said Dzoole: "This very morning before dawn I said to my wife that I had dreamed of Msyamboza coming and telling me that I might give him an elephant tusk. Lo! my dreams are true! If they instructed me to flee I would indeed flee. So these are your words now! You say that you have come to an agreement for a bit of land to dwell on. And have I any words of refusal? No! You know that we have stayed together during years. At the first fighting we were all scattered, at the second we got away to Cinganyama; at the third we aided each other and put Ciwere to flight. Even *I* had not the wherewithal

<sup>1</sup> So translating *mzinda* which means the full initiation rites, including the ancient masked ceremony of *vinyau*, possession of which under permission of the over-lord gave status to the sub-chief so honoured, analogous to a "peerage". No unauthorized community or headman could celebrate *mzinda*.



## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

to show fitting gratitude. Go where you will in my land. seek for yourself the place of your desire; when you are finished you will just tell me so that I may know. I do not wish that you give me anything as purchase price for the land."

"Your words, Chief," said Msyamboza, "are sweeter than honey and the sound of them is lovely to the ear. I go; I go right now to make preparation; and when we have made sure and certain, you will see me here again to report to you."

Then they took farewell and Msyamboza went back home, where he did not lay out the matter to every one but just told his aged uncle so that he might be fully aware, in accordance with the use and wont of our ancestors.

It was on another day that, having meanwhile searched about, he came back to his village and laid the matter clearly open.

"Look!" he said. "I have seen good land there towards the sun-rising. It lies between two little hills, one towards the evening sun called *Nongo* and one towards the morning sun called *Chiedzi*; and there is a stream called *Kasangadzi* which has water even in the hot season. A good land! A fertile garden! Plenty of wild pumpkin and reeds. Truly there lies the land for us."

"Go," said Mamba, "tell Dzoole that it is good. We always say that if there is pumpkin land with reeds there truly will be maize husks also. This very year we should remove and settle there."

Msyamboza was delighted and lay down that night before taking his way to speak with Dzoole at Mndolera. Having gone there and got everything

## SETTLEMENT AT CIBANZI

quickly arranged he came home to put all clearly before Mamba. The following morning everyone began to get wind of the new site and of the removal.

That night Msyamboza said:

"We have found a place whereon to build a village, but what shall we do in view of the fact that the place has a bad name for lions? How will we live?"

"Ah," replied Mamba. "That is a question indeed! It comes from the mind<sup>1</sup> of a proper man. See here! Go and call Cikhumbi: he it is who understands the medicine for wild beasts and lions. If he safeguards the village no one will be eaten by lions. Should anyone be eaten you will know either that he, or she, was a sorcerer or was practising some evil. In a clean community no one is devoured. Take a fowl with you to-morrow for the fee-token, and engage him to go and carry out the safeguarding."<sup>2</sup>

Msyamboza agreed and slept. In the morning he went to Cikhumbi and found him at his early meal. When he was finished they sat apart and discussed the safeguarding.

"To-morrow," said Cikhumbi, "I will come to your place about midday so that we may arrive after dark where you wish me to do my work."

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "from the chest". *m'ufuwa*: perhaps, "from the throat".

<sup>2</sup> This is a lesser ceremony akin to the full safeguarding of a new village which to-day, even in Britain, is still reflected in periodical "Beating the Bounds" of parishes and in "Riding the Marches" among the towns of the Scottish Border. The medicine-man or "safety-doctor" deputed "an old man of quiet mind and a young girl innocent of evil" to encircle the area destined for the life of the community, notch the trees, apply his charms, blow his little horn and utter safety incantations. Later periodic repeats were made if necessary for strengthening and continuing of the safe-guarded condition.

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So Msyamboza went back and awaited the coming of this collaborator and at the agreed time Cikhumbi arrived so that they went off together, did the work of safeguarding and came back to lay all before Mamba along with the question of the payment proper to be made to Cikhumbi. At a later date Mamba himself went also there for the purpose of carrying out safeguarding of the village from *human* hostility and evil.

"Let this village," said he, "remain safeguarded from evil magic and the sorcerer!" Then, all being completed, the people were called together in the morning, and when they were gathered Msyamboza spoke, saying:

"We have called you all, Chief Mamba and I, having agreed together to clear out from here and live at another place. I know that you may have heard rumours of this removal but now take it as assured and every one of you must get prepared for the move."

Said one of the senior men:

"We were just ignorant until we heard you summon us. Having come, you have announced the building of a new settlement; we are the tail and wherever the head points we follow." While another asked:

"At what time will the move be?" And Msyamboza replied:

"All of us to-morrow will go there and commence the temporary huts. Every one ought to be with us so that each may set up his own. In this way, when the move does come we will be all together, leaving no one behind."

Thus, in the morning, with a great calling of each

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other together, all went to view the new place, and Msyamboza said to his people:

"The name of the place is *Sankhawekha* because Dzoole told us that we should find and "choose ourselves" the place for our village. Therefore wherever you go inform people that you have moved to *Sankhawekha*."

So they began to build temporary huts; in some cases, indeed, making some attempt towards the permanent building by gathering together the thatching grass. They commenced the transporting of their foodstuffs—maize, millet, sorghum and the rest—and so carried through the removal from the old site to the new. Yet while the actual building work was incomplete Msyamboza called his elder men together and said:

"You well know that in these present times there is no real peace or freedom. Any man living on the banks of a stream always has his eyes towards where the stream comes from. We here to-day can only say that we are unable to know what will come on us to-morrow. I want to begin to make a great earthwork, having in mind the Ngoni war parties so that if war comes it will find us within a fortification." And when they heard Msyamboza's words all began to make ready, looking out food and beer so that they would give themselves refreshment as they worked. Without delay they started on their great earthwork,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To-day the old sites of the principal Cewa centres of population can immediately be recognized by what remains of these great earthworks and all the older generation still know the facts as to name and original ownership. In all probability their history, as here suggested, does not go back beyond mid-nineteenth century and the Ngoni raiding period.



dividing the interior up into sections rather as in a house.

One section, within its own fence, was that of Msyamboza the leader and all his family, another that of Mamba, the senior headman and another that of Nyankhazi. Then there were the sections of Mwamceka, of Combwe, of Gumba, of Karonga, of Cimkwende, of Nabuzi, of Katimbo, of Mberekete, of Nyongo, of Mujeza and of Nkhanga; with a number of others beyond the memory now of our older people, since it is all ancient history well before the coming of the Europeans to Nyasaland. But Msyamboza called together these seniors of the village who had each his personal section and said to them:

"I wish the village to be looked after carefully. Thinking things over in the night I think it will make for good conditions if we all dig pits so that people do not just squat down anywhere but on pits, and then cover over with soil.<sup>1</sup> I wish you all to do these things within your sections of this walled village "

All agreed and departed. Msyamboza himself dug a latrine pit so that all in his household should betake themselves there, and as a result of this the village of *Sankhawekha* was good to see. Furthermore, Msyamboza refused to allow grass and fragments inside and gave an order for regular sweeping and the burning of all refuse outside the wall. Thus the fame of that

<sup>1</sup> This is a pre-European sanitary experiment evidently forced upon the mind of an intelligent man by the new conditions of life within a fortification which made it less easy for men and women to wander out, particularly at night, into the surrounding bush for the purposes of nature.

## SETTLEMENT AT CIBANZI

settlement at *Sankhawekha* spread among all the other villages in the surrounding country. And Dzoole sent some of his own people with orders to settle at Headman Msyamboza's and both Msyamboza and Mamba welcomed them. The people of other settlements began to seek betrothal arrangements with girls at Msyamboza's while his young men began to make overtures to the maidens of these other places. Thus the people of the land began to intermingle.

Time passed and one day a man arrived at Msyamboza's saying:

"I have been sent by Headman Gusu with a message to say that your sister Mdasiyanji has fallen ill and that he instructed me so that you may be aware, so that you may not be in the position of wondering how things are. The sickness has taken complete hold and the distance to here being considerable I just do not know what may have happened behind me."

"When," said Msyamboza, "did the illness begin if you say that she is dangerously ill?"

"On the night before last," said the man, "there was bad headache and fever aching in all the joints. When I left to-day people were applying remedies through incisions."

"Illness that makes one doubtful and uncertain is evil," said Msyamboza. "But is life not like that? *the child of 'I have my doubts' doesn't get better!* You may go back. We have heard and when we have talked the matter over we will come and find you there to-morrow to look into the whole affair."

Then he went over everything with Mamba, together with the senior men and old women and his

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

wives, coming to agreement that they should go. Early next morning, however, came another man, crying:

"Behold these beads!<sup>1</sup> That illness is turned to-day to funeral weeping!"

And Msyamboza, astonished, straightway summoned everyone to hear the message properly set out. All were in sorrow and arranged to start for Gusu's to the burying

Arrived, they joined in the ceremonial wailing and were shown to a hut for themselves, to which there came a senior man of the community who began in greeting thus:

"So you have heard! You have heard yonder of what is here! Even yonder! And you have all come here!"

Said Mamba:

"Yes; we have heard of what is here."

"Well," said the man, "here we were just in our usual when we heard rumour of an illness and we just considered it such as every one of us humans suffers ever and again. We made up our minds to find time to look into the matter. Actually I went out to work cutting the long grass needed for repairs to the roof of my hut, and in the evening got the news that Mdasiyanji was dead. I was struck with surprise! How often had *she* been sick? Are diseases not lengthy and often turning out all right after getting medicines? The sick one getting up even with medicine still in the little potsherd! Alas! Alas! So

<sup>1</sup> The conventional token, a bunch of beads, indicative of desire that all be open and above board, wherever blame be found to lie eventually. The recognized first sign of inter-group negotiation.

## SETTLEMENT AT CIBANZI

it began even in ancient time and with our fathers!

"So we said, Go and call the woman's people so that they may give permission for burial. And thus you have come. Here we hand beads to you and say, Be merciful, for we have brought harm upon you through your kinswoman; and grant permission to us to proceed with burial.<sup>1</sup> Everything that needs to be spoken can rest over till later."

"You have asked us," said Mamba, "whether we had heard of what has taken place here and we assented. Then, going further in your words you said that it was indeed true that the death had occurred; we have heard nothing clearly as to the sickness and thus the death has fallen upon us with surprise and alarm. You have also said that it is people who err and not sticks and trees, offering beads in order that people may betake themselves to the grave and the burial proceed. Thus you spoke. See! We have no multitude of words that we should trouble ourselves at this moment. We have heard all your words, but if there is any more I say *Truly death is a thief* and no man knows when it will befall: thus we just recognize a thing of sudden alarm. Peace and quiet are desired on earth but it is God

<sup>1</sup> Where among the Cewa a wife dies, immediate notice must be given to her kin and burial may not proceed until they are assured of full willingness by the husband-group for investigation and, if necessary, compensation. Where no cause for quarrel develops, the conventional bunch of beads will be sufficient, or some other formal token of convention, properly observed. On the other hand, right to bury may be refused and open quarrel break out, only to be terminated by punitive payments and leaving inter-group rancour behind. Cewa marriage is non-*lobolo* marriage and a much closer guardianship over the wife remains vested in her kin than obtains where *lobolo* cattle have been transferred in equilibrium settlement.

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who has the hostile intent. Thus spoke the ancient ones, that not in the smallest degree can one hinder or hold back that Power who does not try to explain or make answer but just allows. Oh! Ha! We all go erring to the tomb! Look now at that other saying that *one is not baffled to straighten things out in the mouth*; come then, let us then speak that which is desired. I say, let the burial go on; the corpse cannot speak; the case between us need not be frustrated by the burial and we know well that all these words will still be in mind when the time comes to cut the hair.<sup>1</sup> These are my words; should I have erred, what have you to say, Msyamboza?"

"I say," said Msyamboza, "that you have spoken well, since we know that there is a matter to be discussed which, however, is one that falls to be spoken on the day when the bereaved are shaven."

Whereupon these senior men came to agreement as to the burial and issued instruction to the young men to begin digging. All the work was completed in proper ways and the burial carried through. Then, when the day of shaving the hair of mourning came, many met again together to share the beer and perform the dances with which they were used to accompany death. So they continued until their hearts rejoiced. Having deeply drunk and reaching exhaustion, all slept.

In the morning those who had been bereaved, of

<sup>1</sup> After a period of weeks or months, according to the status of the deceased, all concerned gather for the ceremonial cutting of hair which has been allowed to grow during mourning. It is after this has been carried out that all outstanding matters, such as what we are dealing with here or, perhaps, the question of provision for widow or widows, are taken up.

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husband's group and of wife's group, met together in one hut and re-opened the discussion regarding the death which they had previously put aside. Said Msyamboza:

"We have come back again. You said to come again at the shaving of the long hair of bereavement and now we are here before our departure so that we may recall that matter to you; are those not the beads that you handed to us saying, *Matters in dispute do not spoil by waiting*. Get down to it, therefore, and let me see where you stand."

"Truly," replied one of the elders, "we handed over those beads that day as admission that you had a case and that whatever you might say we would agree. Should we now refuse God will take note of us. We do know in truth that the death was one quite unexpected and so bringing us into dread. We tried the diviner but the casting of the lots said only that the spirits desired beer and we failed to see that beer was any cause for the taking away of a person! Yet we here have come to an agreement that since we have a self we wish to hand him over to you that we may clear this case against us of the death. If you have anything else to suggest, or if you agree to accept this man—it may be that you are dissatisfied—speak out that we all may hear."

"I," said Msyamboza, "will not go over all you have laid out here. What I will speak of is that you say you have a man and wish that he may serve as payment for the death of our sister. So you say, but to us that just cannot be accepted! *You* know that our sister who has left us was like the central prop and stay of our community: there was no other

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married woman upon whom we so much leaned as on Mdasiyanji. And *we* know that here she helped you to care rightly for your community, being wife to Chief Gusu, and that things went well in your land because of her. Yet now you mention a serf! Never! say we. What we wish is that since the blood of our sister has been cast upon your land you should divide off for us a portion which will become and remain ours. Failing that, we will not let you off; indeed there will come a breaking and a trampling down even as with elephants!"

Then spoke Gusu, the chief.

"Listen, all of you; you know that it was I who took this woman as wife and it is not my wish that you, my people, should be brought into poverty through this talking. Water once spilled cannot again be gathered up. Thus it is my desire to give to these others a bit of country that they may fire it and cultivate it, because if we should say that we take a hard and oppressive line, is not inter-marriage a basis for free generosity and hospitality. Will some of us not wish later to seek betrothal there? and they also, will they not seek wives here amongst us?"

And at this all clapped hands in assent.

Then said Msyamboza:

"O Gusu! what you say is to be admired. You and we are indeed in bonds of marriage kinship: inter-marriage truly is the way. Now since you have agreed to give us a little land let me come with one more request. I would like you to divide off for us on that side lying towards our own home; it is not good for land to lie in separate, divided patches."

To this Gusu agreed and pointed out the boun-

#### SETTLEMENT AT CIBANZI

daries of the land to be Msyamboza's. Thus ended the mourning rites, and firm relationship was established.

When Msyamboza returned home he gathered all his people and said:

"I know that this land of mine is narrow, as the sheath of a knife, and so I wish that it be known by the name Cibanzi (knife-sheath)."

That, therefore, is the origin of the name; which remains even until now.

Further; one other thing of importance took place. A certain other chief, whose name was Matekwe, took in marriage another sister of Msyamboza's whose name was Mkapusa. There came a day when Mkapusa travelled to visit her kin at Cibanzi, and when there got the news that her husband Matekwe had died. Immediately she returned to share in the mourning for her husband and remained there for a long time until, later on, she again came to visit at Cibanzi and while there death found her also. And she died with head still unshaven from the mourning for her husband. So Msyamboza went to the district that was Matekwe's in order to take this matter up.

"See," he said, "my sister has died still with the long hair of mourning on her head! Give me some land!"<sup>1</sup> And he received a section of land which lay near to his own. Thus by these ways his territory increased.

<sup>1</sup> The probable implication being that the late husband's people were in fault over some punctilio of conventional inter-group, "in-law", procedure touching the proper consideration due to a widow of good status. Msyamboza's demand is recognized as legitimate and is complied with.



## Chapter Eight

### STARTLING NEWS COMES TO CIBANZI

THE old people grieve to-day, saying:  
"Oh, if our land had only remained as it was long ago!"

They judge that the freedom which they once possessed exceeded that of to-day. But the young folk of to-day consider that it is the liberty of to-day which is good, because even a man of self status can own his own things if he has an occupation. In the old days a slave or any person of no account could not wear red cloth since only people of standing wore such; even those whose clothing was of dressed hides were not permitted to use leopard skins, but chiefs and headmen only. Ordinary folk just wore the skins of goats, or cheetah, or serval cats, or other animals. The very poor used the skins of dogs which, of course, were a cause of ridicule since should anyone wearing dog-skin move around in the village it just meant that all the dogs barked or howled and everyone laughed.

People in those days just lived in isolation, apart from the coming of the Ngoni, and free from any taxation. They did not feel that the stickiness of unwashed bodies was really troublesome but just washed as each felt inclined. It might well be as much as four months without a wash, apart from some definite cause, such as a burial ceremony when, of course, all wash. Even then in the cold season the

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purification of face and hands was considered sufficient.

Everyone was obedient to the chief or headman. One reason for this was that when the Arabs came seeking slaves any person who was unruly or troublesome would be sold in exchange for a gun, or for cloth, salt, or beads. Thus, fearing to be sold, everyone made all effort to do right and thus remain free. Their two anxieties were fear of the Arabs and of the Ngoni war parties. In the case of the former there had been occasions when Arabs had come with incivility and brutality, firing their guns; our people being quite defenceless. We know from these things why it was that people came to move about always in numbers together, whenever they had to make journeys.

It was in such a time that Msyamboza used all this great diligence in seeking to secure peace and safety for his community.

There was a day of great stillness and quiet with no noises of human kind in the village; only the sound of the partridges calling and the singing of the little birds; and Msyamboza sat deep in thought. Most of his men and women had gone off to another village whose people were drinking beer in the community rope-making. He himself had not gone as he did not drink beer. When he had tried to drink it at one time, he had found that he became unwell and for that reason he had just renounced it, saying:

"Oh dear! Oh dear! beer hates me!"

And so meditating he called some of his young lads who, since he was absorbed, were sitting apart from him, and said to them:

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"Nowadays I do not go hunting because all the game are scared, yet I do not wish to sit apart idle. Go and get your knives and come with them to the stream."

Off they went to their huts and got their knives and followed, not knowing where he was going nor having any idea as to what their very astute chief had been pondering before he called them

When they came after him, Msyamboza said:

"I want you to cut a lot of reeds. This season I intend to make many mats which I can sell"; and then he and the lads began to cut enough for many bundles, gathering them together and tying them and then carrying them back to the village. And when they got there they began to split the reeds and lay them out in the sun to dry. The next day they went reed-cutting again; altogether they spent five days thus and then, on the next day, began to twist a lot of fibre string for the sewing of the mats. When all was ready Msyamboza called his women together and told them that he wanted them next day to help in the sewing of the mats, and that he wished them to cook maize porridge in quantity so that all should eat and be satisfied.

"I do not wish," he said, "that this work be done by men hungry."

"But," said one of the women, "I have no relish and will have to go to the Kasangadzi stream to fetch some; and is there enough time to pound and sift flour?"

"Ah, no," said Msyamboza, "don't trouble to seek relish in the bush. I will look after that. Is there not that cock yonder and the two black ones not to speak

## STARTLING NEWS COMES TO CIBANZI

of a number of undersized ones? How should I be short of relish? Even if there had not been these cocks, what about beans? Would you not have cooked them? Off you go and get this all done to-morrow!"

All went off and when the day for sewing the mats came Msyamboza ordered that there should be no going away from the work since it was his wish that all should help him in the sewing of many mats. Everyone obeyed and set to at the sewing, receiving the food and commencing to eat while still the work was not ended. Everyone was happy through the generosity of the chief.

While sewing, everyone talked about this and that among all that they saw there, with much laughter. Later Msyamboza and Guma talked together, the latter saying:

"O Chief, you have certainly done yourself well for mats. Are they all just for sleeping on or are some for trading?"

"Oh," said Msyamboza, "all that lot just for sleeping on! Far from it. I shall make trade with some."

"Certainly!" said Guma, "I was amazed at the thought of the chief needing such a quantity. Trading is an excellent thing and you should first and foremost take them to Kasungu where the salt is such as all who get it speak about it. And, further, the people at Kasungu are short of mats."

"I have thought of that already," said Msyamboza. "I wish, when the mats are sewed, to get some of the young men to carry them there with me and I will barter with them, because *nothing comes of itself unless in ill-omen.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A difficult proverb to translate. The idea is that even a sudden

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"What kind of salt is it at Kasungu?" asked a youth. "Is it from ashes as ours is here?"

"Have you not seen it?" replied Msyamboza. "It is not got from ashes but from rocky-looking lumps."

"How then is it found? Perhaps rocks of that sort are here too!"

"No, it is not real rock: what they do is to crumble down clods of earth. If they see any earth that has a white sparkle they know it is salty. Salty places are not far to seek. And, further, those who know can tell from any water that is close to places of salt since such water is tasty. Once they find salt earth they commence taking it and piling it into heaps until they are satisfied that it will suffice in its amount of salt. Then they get their large pots, pour in the salt earth basketful by basketful, and then pour on water just as is done in taking salt from ashes. They do this to strain the earth, then fill up huge jars in which they boil the salty water, throwing in tiny broken pieces of *seker* grass which swells and so holds the salt from quickly disappearing. When it has boiled and boiled the water is finished and only the salt remains, and so they take it and pour it in bags which they hang up high until all the water drips away. That is the salt of Kasungu. Its special excellence is in the drying of fish. Believe me! It is excellent indeed! And that is why I am going with these mats to barter for salt."

"I thank you," said the youth, "I know now."

So the sewing was done and they finished off everything needed to make the mats just right, cutting

access of wealth without known cause would be terrifying, as ominous of some hidden danger from unseen powers. Cf. *Timeo dona ferentes*.

#### STARTLING NEWS COMES TO CIBANZI

off any sharp points with a knife. They rolled up tens of bundles and got the people to stow them away in the huts.

The following morning they set about getting ready for their journey to Kasungu. Msyamboza called up a big company to carry his mats for him along with some of his senior men and women. They did not make long journeys each day but went easily, sleeping, travelling and sleeping until they reached Kasungu. In some cases the places where they slept belonged to friends since there were those who in the migration from the old Malawi country to the Themba area had not travelled with Mamba but had followed up by the Lake, scattering and settling here and there; some going right on to Kasungu.

On arrival the sale of the mats began and there was great competition among the people for them until every one was sold and the return journey to Cibanzi completed. Everyone rejoiced at their home-coming and came to Msyamboza that he might give them some of the salt. But he said:

"This salt of mine is for trade; yes, and my wish is not to sell it off here in my own village but to go bartering with it in other villages. You must not come simply to beg for it!" But he there and then took one bag and began dividing out among the people, saying:

"Here you are! Let everyone have a taste of it and do not think of me as hard-hearted."

So his people, all who were present, received salt and revelled in its sweetness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the very limited range of African sources of "relish", salt is what sweets and confections are to us. Even to-day a

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

The very next day he called up people to carry his salt bags for him and set off southwards to more distant places and there began to bargain for slaves. One bag of salt bought two slaves, and he bought a number, both men and women, returning with them to Cibanzi where he took certain of the women as wives for himself and divided the others among some of his people. The male slaves he allowed to live in liberty, permitting them to build huts for themselves in the village and to marry while remaining personal serfs to himself<sup>1</sup>. Finding that everyone praised him and was fond of him, Msyamboza went further with this salt trading at Kasungu and the bartering for serfs so that the Cibanzi population became hundreds; indeed he held to this work of his until he became a changed man and entered upon another.

A day came when he got word of large numbers of elephants in the Marambo country, the low-lying plains of the Luangwa river (in Northern Rhodesia to-day). In his Cibanzi area they had become few owing to constant killing, so he called a conference concerning this news and took certain of his women with men and guns, deciding upon a journey to Marambo. There they made a long stay and he struck traveller able to carry bags of salt as barter goods will never fail of a market in any village.

<sup>1</sup> In the original vernacular the word translated here as "in freedom" and that translated as "personal serfs" are *ufuru* and *akapolo* respectively. This throws a most interesting light on the actual value of words which we ordinarily would translate as "freemen" and "slaves". The *kapolo* servitude under conditions introduced by Arabs, Portuguese and West Coast Slavers was a dreadful new thing, to which the old "domestic serf" word *ukapolo* was applied for want of any other and thus came to denote only and always our conception of "slavery"; though in its origin it was an old African term for a milder social level of inferiority; somewhat analogous to our epithet "proletarian".

## STARTLING NEWS COMES TO CIBANZI

up friendship with the local headmen and chiefs. Many elephants were also killed with his guns, and when he set off home again he took with him women of the Wiza people and brought them to Cibanzi, where, after not many days, he collected all the ivory he had brought with him from Marambo and went with it to Ciwambo, which to-day is Portuguese East Africa. There he bartered all the ivory with Arab traders and in exchange got guns, cloth, beads and salt.

On his way home he bought serfs with the cloth and salt and beads and brought them to Cibanzi. Some became his wives, others he presented to certain of his own male serfs, while others he allowed just to live as ordinary folk of his village. Thus Msyamboza explored many territories and lived with wives from the Cikunda tribe, from the Wiza, from the Senga as well as from the neighbouring communities. The increase in the numbers of his serfs brought fame to the village of Msyamboza and superiority in size to all others. He himself had twenty-five wives. Many of his children are alive to-day and in total they were sixty-two. The leading families amongst them to-day have their own villages, paying hut-tax in their own right and numbering about thirty-three. They do not all know their ties of common origin so that while some may be in mourning for a death their real kin are unaware and may perhaps be carrying on with dancing and other pleasures. It is only the death of the prominent person that shakes all the village. Yet they all are of the community over which Msyamboza ruled.

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## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

There was one journey that Msyamboza took to Marambo after elephant and then carried the ivory to Kota Kota on the lake Nyasa, where his heart sank to see the Arabs so numerous and their town so strong. But he met with one Arab who made strong friendship with him and invited him to eat food at his house.

"My friend," he said to the Arab, "how do you cook this meat that it tastes so well? and what a beautiful smell!"

"Ah," replied the Arab. "Look carefully, Chief. Do you not see something else that surprises you about the meat?"

"Truly," said Msyamboza, "I see small white things and I hesitated to ask, fearing to annoy; what are these little things?"

"They are something we grow in our country," said his host. "They are called onions. You have none in your land?"

"None at all!"

"Well, this vegetable is our favourite and most important food, if you take away some seed of it and plant at your place, we ourselves will come and buy with cloth or any other things according to quantity, and you will greatly enrich yourself; you will be able to travel with the onions and sell anywhere to us Arabs."

"Will you," said Msyamboza, "be good enough to let me see the plants; what they are like?"

So the Arab called his servant and said:

"Go with this chief to the vegetable garden and show him the onions; explain to him all about the planting of them." And Msyamboza went to the

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garden, saw onions in great quantity and tasted them.

"How they nip!" he cried. "How comes it that they taste so well with meat?"

"Oh," said the lad, "once cooked they excel in tastiness, but even when raw we love them greatly."

Then Msyamboza begged for onion seed and got also sugar-cane and sweet potato with which he returned to the Arab's house and sat long talking of food planting. In the morning, when the sun was up, he set off on the road back to Cibanzi with all his men, and as soon as he arrived he set to work at a great digging of a garden for the sweet potatoes, planting also the sweet cane and the onions, and dividing out some to his people whom he instructed in the right ways of planting. They all rejoiced in this chief of theirs.

In that long-ago time also he taught his people that it was necessary to control the flow of water if seeds and plants were to grow rightly, since, if a man would have a large vegetable garden,<sup>1</sup> it would be beyond his powers of watering merely by hand. He taught that it was necessary to lead water in channels from higher up and also that in the cultivated plots over-damp soil meant a multitude of weeds, so that it was necessary to dig drainage channels if the sodden soil were to disappear.

Thus at that time he entered on a great work, together with his people and his serfs (and he had workers in numbers like to the very grains of soil) so

<sup>1</sup> The word here translated "vegetable garden" is *dumba*: actually a food ground prepared in or at the side of a stream bed in order to take advantage of valley soil for special crops and for production at seasons when the usual forest-land gardens would be out of bearing.

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that he prepared an immense *dimba* of sweet cane, onions, sweet potato and banana; leading water to the ground and prospering happily. They ate certain of the things but the sweet potato and onions were bundled up and traded at Kota Kota, in the Marambo, to Ciwambo, to the Zambezi and many places where were Arabs. He began, too, to distribute onion seed to other people who also commenced to eat both onions and sweet cane.

Then, when many days had passed, his uncle Mamba died and Msyamboza remained alone and carried on his own head the great burden of responsibility for the security of the Cibanzi community. He issued his orders at night ere men slept from an ant-hill in the centre of the settlement; on this he climbed and called out stating whatever instruction he had thought out for them. His people markedly increased through the activities that brought him prosperity together with the produce of his gun, *Cinyampheta*.

## Chapter Nine

### EUROPEANS APPEAR IN ANOTHER AREA

IT is ill-fortune to any country where differing sections lack different necessities. One part has its particular crops while another has others. Some people live where food-crops grow abundantly but they sorely lack relishes, so that, to find these, they have to go on journeys. Others live in a land with no lack of relishes but the staple food-crops are scanty. Others still, live where there are both, but firewood, or sufficient water, they have little of. It goes without saying that all should be found in ample supply in one place: in such an area mankind lacks nothing that is good.

There was a season when a certain man called together his companions there at Cibanzi and told them that the reason for calling them was plain poverty.

"Look," he said "Day after day we just take tasteless, watery relishes which lack salt. I had thought that perhaps it was my family alone who lacked but I have seen elsewhere, where I have been sharing food, that they too lack salt. And so I have been thinking in the night that if we lack now what will it be like when the rains come? Surely it is right that we go to make salt at the Lake before the rains bring all their many labours. Forgive me for getting you out of your huts so early that you shiver with the cold. You must decide whether I have done wrong or have spoken truth."

"Well," said one of the others, "I certainly did not know that it was such a matter you would speak about. I said to myself, What can have been seen, thus early? Perhaps someone there has felt the night to be too long, or, it may be, some other things have happened! Now hearing your thought, personally, I can at once agree. Do not think of asking our forgiveness, that you should have troubled us by making us come in the cold. Can one man like you possibly go alone for salt? Is it not needful to travel say ten, or twenty, or even thirty together? Otherwise, is it not just as though you are on your way to burial? It can't be done! It just means that people would be killed before they reached the Lake."

"Surely," said another, "is that not obvious? Is that not how we went in past years for salt? Is that not how we, time and again, met no enemies? We are grateful that you have reminded us. Have no misgivings. Salt will be ours once we have cut the salt-grass and boiled it; possibly also we will begin to barter with those who have not found it convenient to go with us. Even as you say! But one thing I see to be needful and that is time. Come on! Let us arrange a time for starting so that we may tell the women to get flour ready for provision to and from the Lake, and when we do that let us betake ourselves to the fire for warmth."

All exclaimed together in assent:

"Very true!" "That is right!" "Let us go a week to-morrow!" But some thought a day later and others two days later. However, all came to agree that the start be made, and Msyamboza arranged with his wives that some would go to the making of the salt

#### EUROPEANS APPEAR IN ANOTHER AREA

but that he wanted others to stay behind and do the work of weeding and cleaning the food-plots.

"Your companions will share the salt with you," he said, "once they have boiled it down."

And to this all agreed. When the arranged day had come and passed (they, of course, did not know the difference between one "week" and another but when counting said, "for the start we will go on *Tsiku phi!* one day: *Tsiku phi!* one day", and so on until the desired number), all gathered together their things; the women the flour and relishes, the men their bows and clubs, axes and sickles for grass-cutting, and off they set for the Lake.

Once arrived, those who had not before seen the Lake were dumbfounded. From a distance they judged it to be a great plain whose grass has been properly burned off with the ash dust lying blue-black over it. When they heard that it was water, they doubted. On coming near some held back through fear of crocodiles. And there, on the ground rising from the shore, they put up their huts to stay in while making the salt. And during those days they saw many things to surprise and confound them, but they kept at it, cutting the salt grass until they had many heaps; each one his or her own heap so that no one shirking the work of cutting should profit from another.

Once the sickle work was finished they began to burn the salt grass and gather up the ashes for keeping, thereafter getting ready for the homeward journey which they began on the following morning. All the way home they spoke of what they had seen, laughing over this and that which had interested and amused them; and so came again to Cibanzi. It was

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

night when they reached home and everyone in the village rejoiced over them and gave them a great welcome. When it was light next day Msyamboza asked one of his wives how the journey had gone

"Tell us," he said, "fully of your journey. We here at home are all right. There are, of course, illnesses in some of our homes but, after all, there is no village without illnesses."

"Well," said the wife, "it is right that you should ask, but if you had asked among your men they would have told you all about it much better than I. We certainly have been to see things of wonder which seemed to me as if they were portents of the unknown. We went where we saw people red in colour as a dull fire. They say that they are *Akamnjerezi*, but to me people like that cause fear."

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" exclaimed Msyamboza. "Portents indeed! How did you call them? *Akanjeza*?"

"No, not *Akanjeza* but *Akamnjerezi*."

"Well, tell now how you saw them, these *Akamnjerezi*, so that I can understand clearly."

"They certainly are real people," replied the wife. "Ears and eyes and mouths; walking about, too, just as people do. But what was astounding was that their bowels made sounds while they were eating! *la! la! la! la!* just like that. I tell you we were puzzled!"

"What did they eat?" demanded Msyamboza.

"I did not myself see them closely, but you can ask your men; it was they who saw the eating and reported that the *Akamnjerezi* love to eat eggs as children do it; not roasted but fresh!"

"Fresh!" gasped Msyamboza, "don't make me vomit! My stomach is upset and my throat chokes!"

"Yet it is true," said the wife.<sup>1</sup>

"Tell all clearly, then," said Msyamboza, "because I have never heard anywhere at any time about such people, and so my heart fails me—where have such people come from?"

"Up from the Lake they have come. Do not imagine that it is we only who are dumbfounded: all the Lake shore people are so also, just like us journeying strangers."

"And if you had not made this journey to a strange place would you have known of this!" exclaimed Msyamboza. "Do you mean to tell me that these people have just suddenly emerged from the Lake as if they were crocodiles? With no one seeing how they came?"

"Oh, they came out of a shining white thing, in appearance somewhat as one sees a canoe, but very large, also terrifying; the Lake itself was disturbed. When they disappeared it was towards the north and we have no idea where they went because we had finished the salt-burning and came away quickly, thus we do not know their destination. Had it been otherwise, and perhaps these people intend returning from their travels, we shall hear."

"But is Cinsamba not there and very many others? How comes it they have not killed these people?"

"No! No! They are a terrifying kind. They have

<sup>1</sup> We have, of course, arrived now at the point where first contact is made with Europeans, white men tanned red by the sun. These probably were the Scottish missionary party under Dr Robert Laws who settled first (1875-84) at the south end of the Lake Nyasa, before moving midway up the western shore for permanent settlement at Bandawe in what is now the West Nyasa District. At this particular contact they seem to have been exploring northwards along the coast.



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guns and fighting with them would be a serious matter. They are human beings, certainly, but they are fighters. When they walk they just go *tang'a-tang'a*, treading carefully. They wear cloth sewn into divided legs and move stiffly. They cover the chest, too, with cloth, and what skill in sewing! At the neck also and down to the hands, all sewn! Even some kind of thing on the head, but we could not see what kind of thing."

"These," said Msyamboza, "are not real people but spirits from the graves. Beat the drum music for them and will they not dance? One day I shall go among them myself when we are making salt so that if I have good fortune I may actually meet them. Hearsay is not enough for me."

"Well," said the wife, "what goes on down at the Lake is too much for me. I heard that men and women bathe at the same place! What sort of custom is that?"

"Yes," said Msyamboza, "but have you not sometimes seen people relieving nature even at places where others wash? Other folks—other ways," and at this Msyamboza ceased his questions about the journey to the Lake and went off to see and talk with the others. But some considerable time after there was heard a rumour. A man in the course of a journey described a story which he had heard as relating the arrival of *Akamnjerezi* to the country of the Yao; that their name was really *Azungu*,<sup>1</sup> and that they had

<sup>1</sup>The name by which Europeans have long been known in S E. Central Africa. The Yao country was all around the south end of Nyasa and up into the highlands east of the Shire river flowing from the Lake. Kabula is what we now call Blantyre, commercial centre of Nyasaland.

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come to Kabula. Everyone gazed at him open-mouthed and poured out questions: some indeed withstood him and told him that he was lying. But the man stood his ground and the story spread.

Time passed and then a further rumour went around, that the *Akamnjerezi* had come to Kota Kota; that the Jumbe had not fought them because he was afraid, and had indeed done homage to them; it was also heard that he had made a pact of friendship, or so the *Azungu* said. And this story also spread, nothing being seen to stop it. A further rumour had it that the "soldiers" of the *Azungu* were arresting people who were attacking each other down at Kota Kota and in the surrounding villages. Thus rumour grew.

Many of the people began to grow anxious about their land. What made them worry was that they did not know how the country would fare in face of these things being done and rumoured during those days. It was said, for example, that should the strangers increase in numbers would they not seize the land and despoil its people? Thus hearts were full of dread.

"If the stories of the arrival of these *Azungu* are true, we will greatly suffer and be in want."

Then, when further time had passed, another report went round, that no one was to sell any human being to Arabs; should anyone sell his fellow he would be punished by soldiers. On hearing which Msyamboza lamented. "The good days are gone," he said. "What sort of people shall we become if we cease to buy and sell serfs? Does every one not understand that our principal source of trade is just this?" And the Ngoni also bewailed this state of peace:

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"If we are forced to cease raiding and taking captives then the people of other tribes will grow conceited through these *Azungu* and will be impertinent to us." Indeed they composed a song, *Kamtunda wanyang'wa*, meaning "the country bumpkin swells with pride".

They lamented greatly because people would not now fear them, knowing that the arrival of these *Azungu* could act as preventive. It seemed to them that their prestige was at an end and, further, that opportunities for enrichment now ended also.

The serf peoples, however, rejoiced, saying:

"Nowadays there are these *Azungu* here. Though I should do this or that no man will oppress me."

The repute of the *Azungu* began little by little to put the country right. People began to give up capturing and selling slaves in all parts. There were, of course, those who paid little heed and went on selling their fellows to the Arabs secretly, not openly for fear of being found out by the soldiers.<sup>1</sup> But anyone wishing to make a journey did so without any fear.

Another thing is this: in those old days if a man lived at his family home with his wife he never knew how long they would remain together. In thought it was always just a matter of whether he, or some

<sup>1</sup> The word used throughout is *asilikari* which under modern conditions of civil government might more properly be "policemen" than "soldiers". But at the time of the events recorded here, with anti-Arab activity conducted as a military operation, the policeman as a civil functionary had not yet appeared. The term itself—still applied equally to men of the King's African Rifles and to the uniformed civil police force—arose as African rendering of the phrase (*anthu*) *a Sirkai*, Government's men, used of themselves by the first troops in Nyasaland, a contingent from India.

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neighbour, might be sold away. Thus, on hearing that slaving must be stopped, all of self status greatly rejoiced, knowing that now they could rear their families and look after their food crops happily. Only the chiefs and powerful ones failed to rejoice over this peace nor did they quickly cease their oppression and troubling of the people in their areas.

But this indeed was the beginning of bright day in these parts, a brightness lighting up a darkness of ignorance and isolation which was changed into a more than golden light and a peace for all.

#### END OF PART ONE



## PART TWO

### Chapter One

#### MSYAMBOZA PLANS TO VISIT BANDAWE

MSYAMBOZA was a chief of great astuteness ; he was also one who looked far ahead. His great dread was war, and so, in order to avoid all fighting he tried by one device or another to keep friendly relations among the principal chiefs of the surrounding territories. His first friendly ally was the Jumbé ruling at Kota Kota. There he placed one of his sons, so that should any hostilities break out he would give warning. In the same way, in one quarter or another, there were men who acted as eyes to Msyamboza.

At Mbawa there was another chief widely known ; not of the Cewa people but of the Ngoni. His name was Mbulasyeka ; a chief greatly given to war, time and again ravaging the villages of other people and taking some into servitude while killing others. Dreading Mbulasyeka greatly, Msyamboza sent a nephew to seek marriage there and be continually alert in his interest. Through this marriage the two chiefs came to think highly of each other, so much so that many people judged them to be actual relatives, not realizing that it was merely a pact of alliance. When also Msyamboza killed elephant he was in the habit of sending tusks to Mbulasyeka and others to Jumbé ; as free gift without any price. So they re-

mained for many years; in mutual friendship and with exchange of visits.

One day Msyamboza took his gun and went into the bush for a hunt. He killed an eland and called his people to cut it up and take it to the village. All the meat was carried and Msyamboza divided it round the village. No one needed to ask; hut after hut had meat to cook. But after dark Msyamboza heard talk at his door in a stranger's voice and went out, saying:

"Are there travellers here?" To which a man replied:

"Yes, I am indeed a traveller, as you say."

"Being dark," said Msyamboza, "my eyes do not see clearly, and it may be that I am putting questions at my door to one who is my neighbour; forgive me, who are you?"

"Do you not know my voice? Come along, recognize me!"

"Surely it must be one of my neighbours! Who are you?"

"I am Mkandawire!"

"What particular Mkandawire? from Mbulasyeka, or some other Mkandawire?"

"I am Mkandawire,<sup>1</sup> child of Mbulasyeka."

"Ah! why have *you* thus puzzled me? 'Tis his your very own village here . . . you a traveller with your eyes stuck fast!<sup>2</sup> Come in to the fire! I greet you."

<sup>1</sup> *Mkandawire* is one of the oldest family clans in the more northerly parts of Nyasaland. The appearance of the name far south and in conjunction with that of an Ngoni sub-chief may mean nothing more than that Mbulasyeka had a son born about the time that the Ngoni overran the Mkandawire country at the north end of what, since about 1855, has been Ngoniland, and gave the name to the boy in consequence.

<sup>2</sup> A neat and typically African play on words: *monga mlendo wolenda maso*, just like one who travels with his eyes glued up.

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"Thank you; I wandered about for a long time asking which was the chief's hut and arriving just here they said. This is the chief's hut, and did I not rejoice!"

"But how did you forget the hut? Was it not just the other year when you came with your over-lord Mbulasyeka?"

"Ah! that is a long time ago; my son born at that time is catching field mice now. A fine strong little lad: you would hardly believe if you saw him that he was mine."

"Well, well! enough loud talk. Tell me, how are things where you have come from? Is your Great One well? How goes everything?"

"True enough; no more need for raised voices! Where I have come from all was well when I came away. As to what has happened later it is God who knows. I speak of actually leaving things all right without any idea of what may just have suddenly happened even the moment I left. The chief himself, and the wives, I left well, and they asked me to carry a greeting. Indeed they said that should they remain in health you might all see each other. Now I wonder how things are with you?"

"I myself at the moment am quite well," replied Msyamboza, "but yesterday my joints were paining me; it came on when at the *ncuwa* game outside there, and once it was dark I did not stir from beside the fire, though even if they made a big blaze for me I still did not feel it. Even though it was after dark, some of our elder women poulticed and rubbed me; they also rubbed powdered medicine into incisions cut into my skin. The result has been that by morn-



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ing my body was cool. Some of my young men made a sun-shelter, indeed I gave them a hand myself once I saw that the illness had deceived me ”

“Sickness pleases no one,” agreed Mkandawire. “It is health that is desirable. We just fall ill as suits God’s instructions, he who gives us health and then, again, come those dream-messages of illness. Alas, it is so! I myself at the time that the moon just finished was darkened, went to our home village because of a death. A mature man, one we had great trust in, look you! Having decided to go, we got there only to find he was dead.”

“Ah! pardon me,” said Msyamboza. “What had been the trouble?”

“The people said that it began in the ear and though they tried and tried to get the cure he remained ill. Later on there was throbbing at the temples and they say that medicine-man after medicine-man, of all kinds, tried this cure and that, but all in vain. God has taken my friend!”

“But,” said Msyamboza, “what sort of illness is this which refuses treatment? This is an illness caused by man. But what does it avail a man to will evil upon others? Is not his own grave wide open, waiting for him? The end of all men is death, thus those who came before us are now at rest.”

Then Msyamboza told his wives that a guest had arrived and that a meal of porridge should be served quickly.

“Ha!” exclaimed Mkandawire “Now, of certain things one may easily speak, but of other things a man should not talk if he is to be considered reliable. Have you ever seen what I have seen, Msyamboza?”

MSYAMBOZA PLANS TO VISIT BANDAWE

"Ho!" said Msyamboza. "And what sort of things are they that you have seen, Mkandawire?"

"Well, we just heard certain people who had recently gone to cut salt-grass at the Lake reporting that they had seen people called *Akamnjerezi*, but we looked upon it just as lies. But now, Chief! don't be alarmed! Even I myself have seen them with my own eyes. Believe me, I beseech you! These *Akamnjerezi* are known as *Azungu* down there. They have four eyes. At each eyelid there are two eyes<sup>1</sup>. They have the most searching faces, full of astuteness."

"And," said Msyamboza, "so it must be then what my folk reported to me some time back is true?"

"You can trust it beyond doubt now. Here am I who have come from there. I saw their eating. I saw their walking to and fro; and I tell you they are a people of strong medicine."

Then at this point they broke off for a little their talk, having received the food which Msyamboza's wives had cooked. This they ate and were joined by another who consumed what they left over. When all was finished Mkandawire asked:

"What sort of meat is that which we have eaten? Is it cow meat?"

"That is eland meat that I killed yesterday. That is why it is to-day's relish in all the huts."

"In other places meat like this is hard to come by, and if you had been otherwise situated you might have gone to Bandawe where, if anyone kills meat,

<sup>1</sup> The first contact with someone wearing spectacles. Mr. John Moii, the elder of the two brothers who founded the African Lakes Trading Corporation in 1878 wore glasses and received the name *Mandala*, he of the shining eyes, which became the recognized local name for the Company.

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there is tremendous competition for it. Here you just waste your time, killing meat and giving it away to your people. You should give heed to what I say and put trust in it. Don't think me impertinent!"

"Well," said Msyamboza, "what sort of meat animals are down there?"

"There are eland, just as here; also buffalo and zebra and others of large size such as you, being your own master, can kill to your heart's desire. Even should a child cry for a hippopotamus to be killed, there are plenty of them down yonder also!"

"But," said Msyamboza, "how would I know my way about down there, and to whom would I go to stay? You well know that a person cannot just burst unexpected and unknown into some village! Unless one is well known one runs every risk of just selling oneself into servitude."

"True enough! but there is a chief there whose name is Leza. He is acquainted with us and has been there for a very long time. You ought to go there, hunt and kill your meat, cut it up and dry it until you sell it all."

"You have done well indeed to let me know all this," said Msyamboza. "I had not any idea, Mkandawire, that game animals like that, which here are as common as bits of bark string, were there so valued and desired. Had I known that before, indeed I would have been a very rich man!"

"Well," said the other, "I will sleep before starting back home. To-morrow before it is light I must start. Good-bye!"

"Off to-morrow!" said Msyamboza. "Early in the morning! You must wait for food; don't go off

empty, since your home is distant. Have food before the sun comes out."

"But," said Mkandawire, "I do not wish to wait over food since it is the sun I am to escape; at this season the sun, even when just up, is as hot as at Malimba, and so I shall get away at first cock-crow, thus getting home by the time that it hurts."

Now, therefore, having finished their talk and being weary, they slept. But in the morning, at dawn, Msyamboza told his wives that he had a lengthy journey to take and that they should get ready everything needed to carry when travelling; that is food; flour and relish both. So the wives began to break maize and pound a lot of flour which they spread out in the sun to dry so that it would not smell. They looked out relish also to be boiled with the meat, and tied it all up in packages. Then one morning, Msyamboza called Njiwa, Kasiyamalambo and Masakhumbira, saying:

"I want you to accompany me on a far journey."

"Where do you go far?" asked Masakhumbira.

"I wish to go as far as to Bandawe, to kill game. I will, of course, take some of my women, but it is men who are needed since women can give no help if fighting bursts out upon us; all they can do is cry."

"That is perfectly true, and in any case the value of travelling in company is not due to nervousness or fear alone but also to its making possible mutual testimony in support of each other should anything happen of a kind that might give rise to slander or ill-fame." Thus Masakhumbira, in approval of his chief's projected journey.

Later Msyamboza himself, in passing the time with

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some of his children, was telling them tales of days gone by; how while still quite young there had been a journey on which Bemba people had been met with.<sup>1</sup>

"When we spoke with those Bemba," he said, "they told us about a man in their country who possessed medicine that ensured life. Anyone desiring to live long and not meet early death had only to go to this man, give him something as payment, and he would seek out the needed medicine. They said that after administering the medicine, which is taken after running fast, he dips his fingers into a ball of millet grains and gives some of the grains to the one who has come to him. Each grain corresponds with a moon and at the end of a moon the patient swallows one grain. If the medicine-man gives few grains it is ill-omen, if many, it is good."

While still speaking with his children, Msyamboza saw a tall stranger approaching. He came right up and, when the chief greeted him, he said:

"I have come from Mndolera. The other day I went travelling to another place and I got back from that trip last evening only to find Chief Dzoole summoning me. When I went I found that he wanted me to go and call you. I tried to get out of it, begging him to let me off as I had been very tired yesterday, but he would not allow me to rest. Thus I have come here."

"Well," said Msyamboza, "did Dzoole say why he has called me?"

<sup>1</sup> This suggests, as mentioned in the Preface, that peaceful travel between what are now Southern Nyasaland and North Eastern Rhodesia was possible when Msyamboza was "still quite young", and would support some date approximating to 1840, before the Ngoni had begun to disrupt tribal life and communications.

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"He just sent me," replied the man. "I have no knowledge as to the reason."

"Very well: tell him that the message has been received and as soon as I find time I shall come and hear the words for which he has called me."

But when the young man had gone, Msyamboza went to his hut and told some of the young folk to have some tobacco and snuff made ready and to travel with him on the trip to Dzoole's at Mndolera: and thither he went, with those who accompanied him—a headman never travelled alone, but with people as an escort—in order to hear why the chief had called him. They found Dzoole at the talking-place of the village, among his people and judging a case which they did not hear much of as they arrived just as the talking ended. They had an idea, however, that it had been a matter of theft, but the case being over, all the people began to leave the talking-place and Dzoole greeted Msyamboza:

"Greetings, Msyamboza!" he said.

"Greetings!" replied Msyamboza. "I am here because I saw a certain young man at our place and he told me that you wanted me."

"Let us," said Dzoole, "talk about it with some care because it is a matter between you and me. How are things at your place this year? Your people's food supplies, for example?"

"Things with us are plentiful," was the reply, "most of the people have many food-bins, only an occasional one here and there has a single bin. What about here? Have many completed work on all food-bins?"

"Just look!" said Dzoole, "see how many of the

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food-bins are empty and bare. Much maize was spoiled while still sprouting and so there has not been much to ripen and harvest. Thus it has been a year when some have had actual hunger; some, indeed, have long ago finished their store."

"Would you," said one of the villagers, "please let us have some of your snuff? Allow us to taste how good the tobacco of Malimba is. Ours is just like dust; not really tasty snuff at all."

So Msyamboza took out his snuff-box and from it took the snuff, pouring it out.

"This is quite good," he said, "but the young men who prepared it for me put in too much seasoning so that whenever I snuff it tickles my nostrils too much and goes to my head."

Then the man received and snuffed, whereupon Dzoole said:

"Msyamboza, let us go to the hut and I will lay out for you clearly everything and ask you many questions about things in your area these days." And the two of them went to the hut, where mats were spread for Msyambosa to sit and, on others, Dzoole. It is, of course, customary law among chiefs that where there is equality in status they sit together; a paramount chief sits by himself; commoners just sit anywhere if there are not a sufficient number of mats, because, even if on a mat there should be only a single chief, no commoner can sit with him on it.

Then the private talk began.

"You got my message, Msyamboza?"

"I did: I heard your call."

"Right: I called you on a matter of my own. I heard a day or two ago that you were about to take a journey

to Bandawe. Is it true? Or is it just false talk of passing travellers?"

"The journey is not far off now," said Msyamboza. "The women are just pounding and sifting the quantity of flour needed to eat on the way. I reckon that we will make a stay of some months there. We have heard that any hunter killing game down there makes great profit and that is our reason for going; we go for enrichment."

"And quite right, too," said Dzoole, "that is just what I heard and I said, If he goes then I may make an arrangement with him. But it is a matter like this. I hear that at Bandawe, where you intend to go, there are medicine-men of great fame. I hear of doctors able to protect huts and that the death-dealer sorcerers find nothing; they just see as if it were a great lake.<sup>1</sup> Now hearing news of this sort makes me envious since, as you know, we here have our enemies. What about Ciwerc and Masakambewa and Kafanikhale and Goman? And I hear that those medicine-men protect not single huts only but whole villages: an Ngoni *impi* cannot see a village so protected. For this reason I greatly desire that you should go there and do all in your power to seek out one of these men of powerful medicines and on your return bring him here to me. Whatever his fee for the medicine I myself will pay. Have no anxiety as to the settlement!"

"Very well," said Msyamboza, "I have heard all you say. As I came from home my mind was puzzled,

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to recall that among the "powers" attributed to druidry and also frequently referred to in the most ancient Celtic tales is this of making a place invisible. Druid and Medicine-man are of one lineage.



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not knowing for what I had been called. Who would have thought to hear what you have said! Yet I say this: should I actually take this journey I shall try my utmost by inquiry from Chief Leza and if he and I see the medicine-man you speak of, you will hear whatever is spoken. I cannot say whether or not he may refuse to come here, but whatever that doctor says you will know. We ourselves, with our people, will tell him to safeguard for us also *our* village. Thus you may have a quiet mind: I shall come here again."

"Well," said Dzoole, "should you bring here to us that medicine of safety my heart will be glad beyond measure and my gratitude to you will be immense."

"As if," said Msyamboza, "there is any question of a payment desired by me! Ah! are we not neighbours in all the years? No sort of trouble is involved in this matter. Your good fortune is also ours. Should your village gain in power, thereafter our village, too, will stand strong."

"It is good indeed that you consent to call this man of medicines," concluded Dzoole, "and as you go you should know how my eyes will be open upon the path watching for your coming and that of the safety-doctor."

So when they had taken farewell Msyamboza went back to Cibanzi and just slept there one night. The very next morning the journey to Bandawe started and with him went these men: Njiwa, Kasiyamalambo (a Cikunda man who had settled at Cibanzi) and Masakhumbira. They took also two of Msyamboza's wives, Mwambandiwe and Mgumirapo, with two of his daughters, Mkonda and Cidyawana. The

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year in which Msyamboza made the hunting journey to Bandawe was 1894. It became a famous journey. All Cibanzi people know well about it, because of the affection in which they held Msyamboza their chief.

## Chapter Two

### AT BANDAWE

IN the previous chapter we spoke in passing of a certain man of well-known family named Leza<sup>1</sup> who was living at Bandawe in those days. Msyamboza's party travelled many days before reaching Bandawe and crossed a number of rivers, some very terrifying because of the crocodiles found in them. They were not much troubled by the heat of the sun, though it beat upon them much more than at their home. But they *were* troubled, at almost every village, by having to ask how to get to Bandawe because those they inquired of would direct them sometimes to food-grounds, sometimes to a stream, and even sometimes to the burial grounds. Many times they just followed a path leading straight in front of them as it has been said that if you follow a path that leads straight ahead from your navel you are bound to reach your destination. Time and again also they were troubled by the number of hills to be climbed but eventually they arrived at a point where they came down from the heights and began to travel on a level plain.

Then, one day, arriving at a village and being

<sup>1</sup> A chieftainship of some standing on the Lifupa stream about ten minutes' walk from the Mission Station at Bandawe. The holder of the title some ten or twelve years after Msyamboza's visit is described as "an upstanding fellow, handy with his gun and of repute in the neighbourhood".

stopped by a man who demanded to know where the party was going, Msyamboza said:

"This party is going to the Chief Leza at Bandawe, and we do not know the right path."

"Ho!" replied the man. "You are just there; once you get at that very tall tree yonder you have arrived. You will find that the Europeans' settlement is visible from there, and if you look toward your left you will see a hut of shining whiteness. If you follow the path that turns off there you will have arrived. But stay a moment! join us in tasting a little of the beer that was made for yesterday's drinking." So Msyamboza and his people rested in the shade and received the beer; he and they all drinking of it. Then, when finished and having expressed their gratitude, they went on and came to the great tree the man had spoken of, saw the houses of the *Azungu*, and then, looking to the left side, saw the village of Leza. All rejoiced and limped along in their weariness, hurrying to reach the village. Great numbers of people, seeing that they were travellers, gave them greeting and many dogs barked. Thus they came and made inquiry as to which might be the hut of the chief, Leza.

A man guided them and brought them to the hut where he said:

"*Zikomo!*"<sup>1</sup> We have come with strangers!" and

<sup>1</sup> The principal word of greeting from the point of view of respect and honour to the one greeted; actual meaning hard to parallel in English. Here, as equivalent to a knock at the door, it might be *All's well - nothing to cause anxiety!* At another time where, perhaps, the speaker has received something and gives thanks, it might be *How excellent!* In yet another situation where, perhaps, a litigant has received a favourable decision from a chief and utters the word with softly clapping hands it might be *I thank*

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Leza came out with a greeting to Msyamboza, and the query.

"Where is it now that you have come from?"

"Oh," replied Msyamboza, "from Cibanzi, and far it is to your place here. Many days have we been on the way and the sun has been sore upon us."

"Yes," said Leza, "I know of Cibanzi; without having seen it, because I listened to Mbulasyeka when he came here; he it was who, time and again, told me about the country there. What now is the purpose of your coming here to Bandawe?"

"Our coming," replied Msyamboza, "is due to that same Mbulasyeka: it was he who told us of you and he said that should we go to Bandawe we ought to visit the chief Leza. It is a hunting journey and we are experienced hunters, anxious to kill and sell meat. When we have completed all our purpose, we shall go back home again. I am Msyamboza, chief of that Cibanzi area."

"Oh ho!" said Leza, "so you are Msyamboza the chief! Forgive me! For long I have heard of you as owner of a very large village, but I had no idea it was you!" Thereupon he called a young person.

"Get ready two huts: sweep them out thoroughly that the travellers may use them immediately!" And he made his visitors be seated upon mats which he spread for them. Then the young folk, having swept out the huts, called to them to enter.

"Come in here and warm yourselves at the fire,"

*your Honour!* while, if the case had gone against him, he would still have used the word, still have softly clapped his hands and implied *Very good, sir!*

they said. So Msyamboza and his people went in, the women to one hut and the men to another.

When Leza came into the hut where Msyamboza was, he said:

"The kinds of meat animals that you seek are many here, but the people are mostly slack and lazy in hunting and killing; possibly it may be fear of lions, I do not know. But if you go out and search you will kill many in this neighbourhood."

"Is it far where one hunts?" asked Msyamboza.

"Not at all," replied Leza. "The game is, as it were, just close to the veranda here. You will not be long in seeing them when you go, and I fully trust that if you do go and hunt you will kill a lot."

"What sorts are here?" was Msyamboza's next question.

"Oh; could I reach an end in counting the various kinds? No! The large sort is elephant, and they most assuredly *are* here. People here also, if hippo meat is seen, struggle frantically for it till all is gone. Should you kill hippo to-morrow then it will be finished while the sun is still in the sky. Other sorts take a certain time before their meat is all bartered."

"Well," said Msyamboza, "let us principally go out for hippo because I also love its meat, it is so soft and tender. Our women at home, many of them, refuse it. They say its name is *bokho* and they belittle a meat that is really very good indeed."

"Your people refuse hippo meat!" gasped Leza. "For what sort of reason do they refuse what is so good?"

"Oh," laughed Msyamboza, "people have silly ideas! Some say that a leper who dies changes to

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hippopotamus and enters a pool; later, if another leper dies, the hippo come up out of the water and take away their friend out of the grave where he has been buried. For this reason many women don't eat hippo."

"Now consider, Chief," said Leza. "Many people talk this and that without any truth! Are there not some who say that guinea-fowl are humans, also that the little duiker-buck are humans who have been changed? All such things are just of no value at all. To-morrow if you kill hippo you will see the saliva running here because of the desire for hippo meat!"

So then, they finished their talk about the hippo and made proper arrangement as to how the hunt should go and as to the local men who would go hunting with them. Leza went out and told certain of his men that they were to get their knives sharpened because next day they would go with these hunters who had just arrived anxious to kill for meat. And all in the village heard the news about the strangers with rejoicing, saying: "To-morrow we will enjoy juicy meat!"

Msyamboza and his people were received most gladly and lacked neither food nor water, both for drinking and for washing.

In the morning, while it was still not fully light, Msyamboza and his men—leaving the women by themselves—went to the water along with some of Leza's villagers to kill hippo. Hardly had they got into position when they saw any number and wounded three. Two of them died there and then, but one went under water for a very long time and, after much search, was found dead far out in the lake. Everyone

## AT BANDAWE

rejoiced, leaping about and then pulling the beasts to the shore. When that was done they started the skinning and cutting up and quite a number were glad to take bits of the hide from which to make whips. When the news reached the village crowds flocked to the shore, saw the quantity of meat and began to buy. From other villages, too, as soon as the news was heard, the people came hurrying; all for the purchase of meat. Some was held separate to be given to Chief Leza and some for the travellers themselves to eat. And so also on other days, Msyamboza hunted, killed and traded the meat.

But on his second day at the village he invited Leza to visit him for a talk, and when he came in the evening Msyamboza said:

"The reason for inviting you to-night is rather special; we have a saying that anyone going about in the bush should have an eye for everything and I, before setting out with my people on this journey, was called by Dzoole our big Chief who said to me that he had heard of my hunting journey to Bandawe and wanted me when I got there to seek out a doctor of security medicine so that should Ngoni come with war to his village they would fail. Thus I am, as it were, a go-between in handing on this message to you, and you may help me to find such a medicine-man because in our country there is none. At Nchisi there is Kasukula, but he does not understand the safeguarding of a village by making it appear as if it were only a sheet of water.<sup>1</sup> So please tell me all about

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that rumour of the existence of such a charm may have spread after the building of European houses at Bandawe, with their glass windows. Certainly one Ngoni war-party is known to have fled when the rising sun fell upon the windows



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the medicine-men to be found here at Bandawe. Should we find such a doctor, Dzoole has guaranteed that whatever he may mention he will receive!"

"Believe me," said Leza, "everything you have said is quite understood but, speaking for this Bandawe country, medicine of such a kind just does not exist. I have tried and tried to inquire for a medicine to hold this village of mine from harm and have never found it, even though I offer any amount of wealth. Doctor after doctor declares that he is the one who can do this, but there is no such spell or charm here in this land. Indeed we here thought and trusted that such a medicine was with you; Kasukula's reputation we know of old; only the distance to your country has kept us from going to Kasukula; no such medicine is here, none whatsoever!"

"Sad news that is," said Msyamboza. "No medicine at all! So now what do I do? Is there not some other one, even though he may be of lesser sort, whom I might induce to give me medicine?"

"No! No! I beg indeed your forgiveness," said Leza. "The only thing I can say to you is this: do you see those houses of the *Azungu* over yonder? It is those *Azungu* who have the powerful medicine. They have built a huge house of horns and they do not conceal the horns as we do but just arrange them in a line to be seen by all and sundry."<sup>1</sup>

"Truly, yes," said Msyamboza, "I had just heard

of the house they were approaching. It made the house "disappear in fire", they said.

<sup>1</sup> Game heads on the missionary's veranda had struck Leza forcibly since, in his mind, horns connoted medicines and charms and the death-dealer's (sorcerer's) poison, always carried in the horns of the lesser antelopes.

the name '*Azungu*' before coming here, but I have never set eyes on a *Mzungu* and have no idea as to what sort of thing he may be. Now here you say that these foreigners have medicine; well, how would I set about finding a way to get some and so gladden the heart of Chief Dzoole?"

"Well," said Leza, "there is so far as I have seen only one tip for getting at it. Here in this area the *Azungu* who have come are 'Mission', they want boys and young men to work for them and to learn also from books the knowledge of *Azungu*. If such young people learn then it is they who will be able to show to others the new ways and habits. Thus you should send your young people here to Bandawe to learn. There are also *Azungu* of Government who have come into the land and they want young men to learn to be soldiers. If any *Azungu* of Government seek young men from you to enter soldier service don't dream of refusing. When some lads are with the Mission and others with the Government they will instruct you in all that they do; thus you will understand the powerful medicine of *Azungu* and will keep your village in security. To-day the power of our medicine is at an end! The power of the medicine of *Azungu* is over all. See how the Ngoni and other people are just bowing before them!"

Awed and wondering, Msyamboza exclaimed: "And so *Azungu* too have power medicine! That leaves me puzzled and amazed. What you have said about having no safety-doctor here, I have heard. What you say as to Mission and Government I have heard. But there my mind can go no further. What way is there by which one might come to speech with

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Mission *Azungu*? They sound not unpleasant and I just wish that if I knew how to get on the right side of them I might indeed send lads to learn here. I would have left this Masakhumbira of mine here to stay and learn, but what holds me back is that he is a son of a woman brought in marriage to us; had his mother been native to Cibanzi I would have left him."<sup>1</sup>

"Well," said Leza, "if you want to understand the ways of these strangers, what about us going there to-morrow, because they worship on that day, and if we go we will find all of them there. When we get there I will introduce you and then you will speak just as your heart directs. That is what we will do."

"All right; let us go together to-morrow. Since I do not understand them or speak their speech," said Msyamboza, "you will accompany me." And so they agreed together to go when it was day to the Mission and talk with the *Azungu*. Then they went to lie down, but Msyamboza talked all night with Njiwa, Kasiyamalambo and Masakhumbira about the news of "school" and could not get it out of his mind.

When it was light next day they went to the place of the foreigners and entered into the house of

<sup>1</sup> Msyamboza means that had Masakhumbira been the son of one of his own people, matrilocally married and domiciled, he would have had no anxiety. But the woman concerned was one who belonged elsewhere and to whose village at first had gone the husband from among Msyamboza's people. Proving, as husband, so acceptable, and being almost certainly in the special position of sister's-son to Msyamboza himself, he had been allowed after some years to bring—*Kutenga*—his wife to his own village at Cibanzi. This meant that special responsibility was now on Cibanzi and its chief for the well-being of this daughter from another group, this "woman brought in"—*mtengwa*—and so it was not easy to take decision regarding her son without consulting her.

worship. The teacher who was teaching was one whom the people called *Sing'anga*<sup>1</sup> because his work was not merely to teach the words of God but also to deal medicines to people, to bind up wounds or ulcers and to give liquid medicines to others; thus his real name was not known.

This teacher taught the story of Adam and Eve; how at the beginning men and women were good and blameless, but through unwillingness to obey God and by eating fruit from a forbidden tree they were found to be wrongdoers. The teacher emphasized this, saying:

"Among all of us here on this earth below there is not a single one sinless because our ancestors deliberately went wrong, but there is a safety and a rescue which any man may benefit from and it lies in putting trust in one Jesus Christ who died for us on a Cross. If we believe, then a great good fortune is ours. Trust then! Follow Jesus and listen to His words!"

When the teacher had finished and gone out, Msyamboza said to Leza:

"As to these things spoken by the *Azungu*, let us leave them till to-morrow for I do not rightly understand them."

And they all went back to Leza's village. But in the evening, they began again to discuss the strangers.

"That teacher now; what is his name?"

"Well; they call him Doctor; he understands medicines and he heals people."

"Those words then about Adam and Eve! People like us all! Are we wrongdoers?"

<sup>1</sup>"Doctor"; that is, Dr. Robert Laws, leader of the Scottish Mission.

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"Well," replied Leza, "everybody does wrong, but they say that it is this Jesus Christ who gave life for us. They say that he, and he only, is able to save us."

"That may well be true," said Msyamboza. "Even in war a saviour is needed. There was a time when I saved Dzoole with my gun called *Cinyampheta*: so now I am in wonder about these things and to-morrow I wish to go with you so that, since I have no young men to leave behind here, I may beg that a school may go to our place and my people may learn, along with me their chief."

"You speak wisely," said Leza, "and I believe that those *Azungu* will grant a school and a teacher to teach you and your people."

So, when it was day, they both went again and came to the European's house where Leza gave a greeting to that teacher, saying:

"I have come with a chief from a distance because he wishes to visit you and has words to speak."

"What is your name, Chief?" asked the teacher.

"I am Msyamboza."

"Whence have you come, since I have not seen you hereabouts?"

"Our land is distant," replied Msyamboza. "In the country of Dzoole. That is where my own village lies and eastward from me there is a famous chief whose name is Ciwere."

"What then is it that you have to say?" asked the European.

"Why I have come is because mine is a very large village; look as I may down here among the people's villages, there is none the equal of my village Cibanzi in size and I dread lest my people go astray instead

of gaining wisdom as the people here have begun to do. So I want you to grant me a school, sir, along with a teacher also, because the life that you spoke of and described is the good one."

"Sorry I am," replied the teacher, "that your place is so distant that it is not possible to take school from here at Bandawe, but what I can give of advice is this: we had certain Europeans here of whom one was Mr. Murray.<sup>1</sup> Having gone from here they headed towards Ciwere's country, and just this season I have heard that they are beginning at a new place Kongwe, beside the river Lingadzi. Do you know that Kongwe area at all?"

"Ha!" laughed Msyamboza, "Kongwe is more or less at my door! When their women are pounding we can hear them. One goes there and back in a day. The Kongwe mountain is a high one; but I do not know where any house has been built."

"That's all right," said the missionary. "Since you know the way to Kongwe you should go home and then go to Kongwe to get a school."

"Thank you," said Msyamboza, "you have told me what to do. I had not heard even a whisper about Europeans being near us." And so they took farewell of that European and went to Leza's to talk over all they had heard, and Msyamboza explained all to the two wives and their children. Then at the end of a three months' stay he said to Leza:

<sup>1</sup> The late A. C. Murray, leader of the South African group from the Dutch Reformed Church, who came to Nyasaland in 1888 and after some years working along with the Scottish group, took over in 1894 the area south and south-west, later linking up with further D. R. Church missionaries at Fort Jameson in N. Rhodesia.

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"We want to follow the trail now back home and this journey has rejoiced me more than all those to Ciwambo and the Malambo, since I never came in contact with anything so attractive as this 'school' idea that I have seen here. May you remain well; may you keep us in mind."

And Leza too was happy.

"Travel well," he said. "And come back some other day to kill tasty relish for us once more."

## Chapter Three

### A WHITE MAN AT CIBANZI

MSYAMBOZA and his people travelled easily, without any need to inquire from anyone about the path or about anything else of that sort, since now they were well acquainted with the route. It was a happy journey; plenty of food and meat with no lack of water, since they had a large earthenware water pot which one of Leza's wives had given to one of Msyamboza's. Just as we have noted the experiences of the earlier travel, so now we hear that, on the return, they were well received at the villages right up to the edge of their own country where they, of course, knew everyone.

On the day when they reached the home territory they had rested in the hot hours by a running stream to await the sun's decline. The women busied themselves getting ready some food and Masakhumbira got wood for a fire, taking some of the dried meat and grilling it to eat with the porridge. Then, food finished, they lay in the shade of a tree to straighten their backs and, after a little time of rest, they espied other travellers belonging to a village not far from Cibanzi who drew near and, coming over to them, made themselves known. One of them, after greeting, said:

"And where has this travelling company of yours come from, Chief Msyamboza?"

"Ha!" replied Msyamboza, "we have been far



away at Bandawe; to Chief Leza's in Kanyenda's territory."

"Kanyenda?" queried the man, "which Kanyenda? That one near by here?"

"We went to the land of Kanyenda at Nkhunga.<sup>1</sup> And what about yourselves? How was our village when you left? Was there any word of sickness?"

"Well," replied the man, "just at this present time things are fairly pleasant but, of course, one hears of sickness ever and again. During the days of the late moon people have felt a lot of sore-throat. Not a hut silent without someone, adult or child, coughing!"

"Yes," agreed Msyamboza, "that was an unfortunate moon: even there where we were a lot of the people were really ill. Some of our travelling company felt unwell, too, but not to cause them to lie down sick. They just kept on, however unwell they felt."

"Well now," said the man, "you must not be angry with me, but there is something to puzzle and worry you at your village. A European is there, whose name is Bwana Swann. The name that the people give him is *Kamkamba* owing to the smallness of his body. He came from Kota Kota the day before yesterday and he is after taxes!"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The traditional site of settlement by the first Kanyenda coming down the west shore of Nyasa from the north with his cousin Karonga, sister's-son to Mazizi Karonga, Kanyenda's father, at a date not now calculable. To this day the small iron stool of chieftainship is in the possession of Kanyenda at Nkhunga, chief of the Tonga of West Nyasa. His cousin Karonga going on southwards, is the reputed progenitor of the *Maravi*, or *Marawi* peoples to whom the *Cewa*, the *Nyanya*, the *Mang'anya*, the *Undi*, the *Zimba*, the *Cipeta* and the *Senga*, are said to belong. See Preface.

<sup>2</sup> Our author carries his history forward by leaps and bounds since, reading so far, we have the idea of recent European arrival

## A WHITE MAN AT CIBANZI

"A European at my village!" exclaimed Msyamboza.

"Yes indeed: there he most certainly is."

"And what then," asked Msyamboza, "is this 'taxes'?"<sup>1</sup>

"Even I also do not know the answer to that," said the man, "because very many of the men are off into the bush, fleeing from this European. I have not gone there, believe me! Indeed I just came away without knowing anything about the man except that he has been asking for you. 'Where is the chief?' he says. And the people say, 'He has gone on a journey'."

"Well," said Msyamboza, "we have, as a matter of fact, ourselves met some of these Europeans and have seen that they are a good kind of person." And then they commenced to talk of this and that in their journey until, when they had finished the talk and made farewells, Msyamboza said to Masakhumbira:

"Come on now! Let us get going on our way that we do not arrive after people have gone to lie down, but while it is still light and we can avoid going to sleep hungry."

So they started off and still had not arrived when the sun went in; but on they plodded, strengthened by the sharp air and a fine little wind. Thus, darkness

and also have had the Arab trade centre at Kota Kota mentioned without any suggestion of its having become a British Government station. Actually the date at which Mr. Swann was placed at Kota Kota as District Resident was about 1892.

<sup>1</sup> *Msonkho* the established word now for hut or poll-tax comes from the verb descriptive of the act of feeding a fire to keep it well alight; the tax-payer "feeds" the machine of Government. But its special primitive use is descriptive of the "collection" taken from all as the sorcery-detector dances in growing frenzy towards the man or woman about to be indicated as *mfiti* death dealer and disturber of the peace of the community.

being not yet fully fallen, Msyamboza and his people reached Cibanzi with joy. Crowds greeted their arrival and immediately the chief began to make inquiry about his cattle, "How are they keeping?" and about his workers in the dry-season food plots, "How have they been doing?" and about the seeds and plants—the beans, sweet potatoes, onions, bananas—"How are they all thriving?" Then, when he had finished all his questions, he went to lie down.

Yet, ere going to sleep, he said to a wife: "On the way yonder where we halted, a certain one put news before us of a Bwana Swann, a European from Kota Kota. Has this European gone, or is he here?"

"He has not gone," replied the wife, "he is here, since he awaits you. He is not at all far off, but has fixed his house of cloth in which he sleeps. Each day he summons people, and when his *capitao*<sup>1</sup> has witten and written on a paper he tears it off (i.e. from its counterfoil in the tax-receipt book) and gives to each male. Then he says things to the man; I do not know whither they tend, the things he says. You yourself will hear to-morrow if you go there."

"Who did the European come with?" asked Msyamboza.

"With his *capitao* and other men who carried his house and many loads; also cooking things and food of one kind and another. So far as our foods go, he eats meat, and the milk from these cows of yours, and eggs."

"I will greet him, then, in the morning, because my feet ache with the stones and sand of the journey, and furthermore I am nodding with sleep even as I

<sup>1</sup> Clerk. actually "head-servant" from the Portuguese.

talk." And having so spoken with that wife of his, he lay and slept so that people who came to give a greeting did not have any chance to do so.

But when it was light in the morning, Msyamboza called a youth and said. "Get a goat that we may go and see the European who is here at our village. We just heard yesterday as we were arriving, that a European is here." And when the lad came with the goat they went together to the European and greeted him, saying:

"We see you, Bwana!"

"And who," said Mr. Swann, "are you?"

"I am Msyamboza, chief of this place. I had gone off to a distance and got back home last evening. As soon as I arrived I heard that you were here. Thus I come this morning to see you and I bring this small goat that you may put it on your fire and eat it, along with your men."

"I am grateful. I am glad indeed to see you. I have stayed at your village for several days. And what a village! Are all here your people, or are there some who belong elsewhere?"

"There are those," replied Msyamboza, "who are of my tribe, but there are those, too, whom I bought in the past with ivory. This I have given up and all the people here are in freedom. They may hoe where they wish and live after their own desire."

"You have done well," said the European. "Now the reason for my coming is tax. We are going to look after this land and we want to find men who will go and take employment at Blantyre. They will work for a period and will then get a chit to certify that they are free of debt to the Government."

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"Have you then," asked Msyamboza, "found any men?"

"I have indeed: men have come to me to be enrolled to go for work at Blantyre."

Then, when all the talk was over, the European uprooted his hut, presented some salt to Msyamboza, and started off on his further journey to Dzoole. Later came the news, as the fame of the European spread, that he had arrived at Doozle's, who had given him a number of tusks, and had then gone back to Kota Kota.

Before many days were passed a number of the people decided to go to Kalumbe (a name now not much heard since the chief holding it died and no one succeeded to it; his son taking the name *Mwabwerachaje* which thus is the name now chiefly known) where many were going to attend a hair-shaving ceremony terminating a period of mourning. Msyamboza—though he did not join in beer-drinking—went also to give, as it were, an encouragement to neighbours in trouble, and while there a certain senior man said to him:

"We hear that you recently went on a journey to Bandawe to kill game. When did you get back and did you have good hunting there?"

"I killed very many," said Msyamboza. "We have just got back. But while there at Bandawe we heard that some Mission Europeans have come to the Lingadzi area. Just where are these Europeans? In what direction?"

"What you have heard is quite true," replied the man. "These Europeans are not far off; no farther than to the hill Kongwe. They are yonder at *Msitu-*

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*wa-Nthuru*<sup>1</sup> where you can hear the waters of the Lingadzi; no farther than that!"

"Well," said Msyamboza, "never did I imagine anything like this when we used to bathe and swim there so often, but it is quite all right and I am inclined, should I find a fitting time, to go there and speak concerning some things I have in mind."

Then, when all the shaving ceremony was over and the beer had been taken, Msyamboza and all his folk set off back to Cibanzi.

Months passed and all the various things needing to be done—hoeing, hut-repairing and all the rest—were attended to. Msyamboza himself was happily busy with his hunting and with his vegetable garden, his bananas and sugar-cane and sweet potatoes and onions, and trading in exchange for many cattle. His workers were in number very much as we see now in any place hoeing the ground for Europeans; but one night he was greatly troubled by dreams, dreams which he could not understand. He started up in fear and slept not again the whole night because of anxious thoughts. All night he sat huddled up, and the thoughts that troubled were of those words that he had heard at Bandawe. They spoke to his heart and made him think, "Here am I loitering, delaying, putting off! And it is not right to do so. My delaying and putting off now will bring misfortune later and will spoil my village."

So when the sun appeared he sent one of his wives to call Mamba (by this time another had entered into

<sup>1</sup> *Lit* either "The thicket where the leopard growls", or, "The thicket of the hair-ball", i.e. the wad of hair often found in the stomachs of carnivora.

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the name), Nabuzi, Guma, Matekwe, Mwamceka, Katsika, Cikatulila, Mphamba, Mkomba, Mdyali and Kwale.

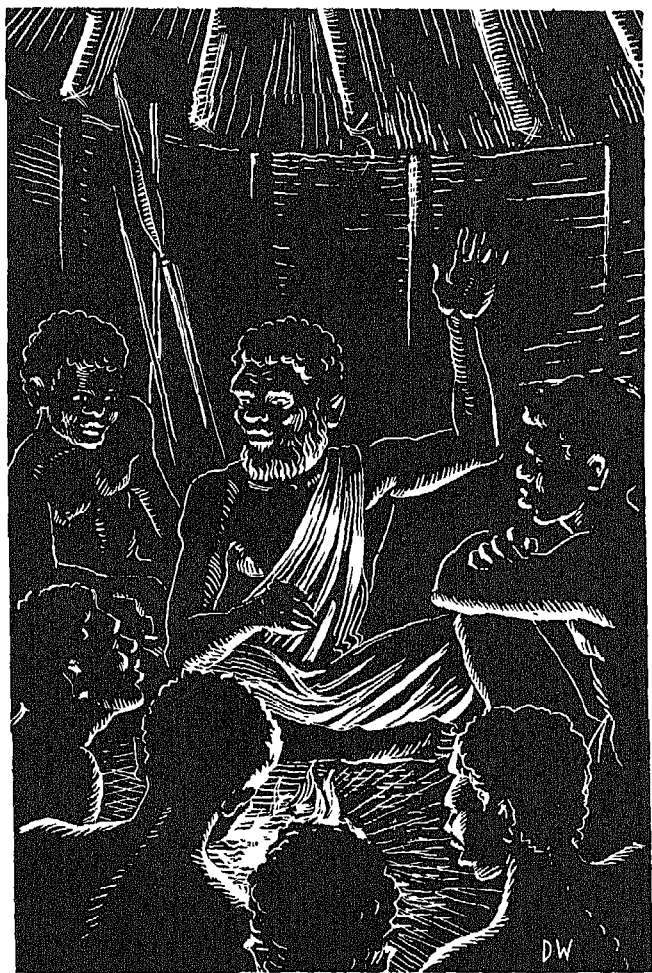
"Let all of these come right now," he said, "I will put before them words that are in my heart." And he himself also called others of his more senior men in the village. Some brought embers and made up a fire in a hut so that any who wanted to smoke might do so. While some had not yet arrived the others talked of this and that and enjoyed the talk, but with it all there was wonder and anxiety over the appearance of Msyamboza since he had not the happy look that was usual.

As they talked, all who had been summoned came to the hut and entered in to find the conversation general. As each entered, Msyamboza greeted him:

"I see you, So-and-So; I see you, So-and-So," and each returned the greeting. Then the chief said:

"This night I have not slept well. I tried and tried to make myself comfortable but it was no good; I just could not be comfortable. The fact is that I have an ailment and this is the reason for calling you; that you may hear of this ailment "

"All of us," said Mdyali, "are here because we heard that you had called. When we heard that we were to come right away we just got going without any knowledge as to what had happened. You, Chief, say that you are ailing and have called us that we may see it; this staggers us exceedingly! What sort of nameless ailment is this that you cannot say, I am ill with such-and-such, so that people here may try to seek medicine and you regain good health? You





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must complete what you have to say and we will know the right way of things."

"You, Mdyali," retorted Msyamboza, "you want to know what my ailment is? It is madness, and I beseech you to seek out for me the cure for madness. Do that and you have indeed come to my aid. Without that I shall take myself off into the bush. Don't desert me, oh my people! Help me, that I may find safety!"

"Ah!" said Mwamceka. "Do not all of you know very well that one does not seek medicines for one who is in health? Now you, Msyamboza; what sort of madness is this that you say we should seek medicine for, to help you? Does one really seek madness-medicine for one who is not a madman?"

"Well," said Msyamboza, "this madness is that I want to get something for my people that is called 'school', which I heard about when at Bandawe."

"Oh!" said all. "What is this now?" And Mdyali asked:

"Just what is this school? Tell us!" And Msyamboza replied:

"You have done well to ask, Mdyali: as the saying has it, *one who asks does not have his bark-cloth torn*. You all know that I went to Bandawe along with Mjiwa and Masakhumbira and Kasiyamalambo and some of the women. Well, we got there and did some killing of meat animals which we were hunting; and we saw Europeans of the 'Mission'. But their talk! You have no idea! What we had gone down there for was because Dzoole our chief sent me to get from there the proper medicines for safeguarding a village, and I was told that the medicines of real power were

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with the Europeans of the Government and of the Mission. The people told me that we should hand over young folk to the Europeans and they would then be able to put us wise to the right and proper medicines. What urged me and strengthened me especially was my wish to protect this village of mine, that it remain strong. And down there we found very many people, particularly young men, able to read, and one hardly believes them to be children of mortal woman until assured that this or that one is the child of such and such a woman! I do not know if I am losing my mind. If I am, please help me to find a cure for this insanity "

"Well," said Mkwangwanula, "you know me, that I am not one born in this part of the country but at the Zambezi and I know that you call me a Cikunda. True, I am a Cikunda, but why I am saying all this is because any kind of ill-speaking or misguiding of a friend or the children of a friend is a great sin. Look now at this 'school' you talk about! We in our land saw this a while back. I personally am one who is ignorant about 'school' and I cannot tell you that 'school' is such-and-such or such-and-such. But judging by what I saw in that past time<sup>1</sup> I might say that I would have greatly coveted the chance, had any 'school' been near our home, to have been a learner. So now, since our chief tells us that he wishes to go and bring a school, I say to you, Agree! since this

<sup>1</sup> It is very difficult to know just where this man had lived in Cikunda country to be able to speak thus but he probably was originally from the Shire River valley where at that date news of schools, if not actually schools themselves, might have gone about following upon the start of Mission work at Blantyre in 1876, or even from the ill-fated attempt by the Universities Mission in the Shire valley about 1861.

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

'school' thing will bring good fortune to us and to our children. At our home a literate person becomes very well-off, since if he writes a letter for someone, that person hands him a chicken. Do not delay over bringing 'school'. As to its connection with medicines, what Msyamboza has set forth is right. It has medicines which are truly of great power."

Then Katsika spoke. "For some of us," he said, "we just know nothing whatsoever of this talk about 'school'. We just know how to count beer pots and how to blow the foam off the beer: and when we have drunk we go to sleep and that is all. Continue then, and tell us more about 'school'."

"Oh," exclaimed Mphamba, "you do not know what you are talking about; you just have not understood at all. You just have your ears closed up with beer! Has he not already explained this 'school' affair? What more explanation do you want? You are all wrong together in this matter. What I say is, very many are entirely ignorant of what you have been speaking about, Chief; and so far as hearing goes we have just heard in our ears alone that 'school' is a good thing; so we are quite pleased and we say, If we had been young men even we would begin this 'school', but since this is beyond us let us call a 'school' so that our children may be learners. I agree, and have not any reasons for opposing you."

Then spoke Mamba: "In time past we have feared the Ngoni and done homage through seeking alliances and friendship. What we said was, we must retain something of freedom! Quite so! And what about now? Here we see arriving other people of greater power than the Ngoni, people called *Azungu*. And

we should ask ourselves, Is it not anxiety and dread that is the cause of this meeting here now? Thus I say, Let us go and submit in homage to these *Azungu*. You, Msyamboza, go and bring this 'school' from *Msitu-wa-Nthuru*, so that our children may learn well. What we desire is anything that will be of advantage to our people in their lives rather than anything that would not be to advantage. I therefore support what Mphamba has said, that we receive this 'school' which it is Msyamboza's desire to have."

At this Msyamboza thanked his counsellors all and said: "My heart rejoices that you agree to take a school. When I left Bandawe my mind was thinking that if my counsellors themselves had been here and seen all these things themselves, it would have been good. Last night also, that was my thought. Now, as my people, you have given your thought to this, that it is good; so I rejoice. *One does not call a thing bad if one has not tasted it.*"

At this, all with one heart assented and took farewell of each other. Msyamboza went to his hut and the others to theirs. It was a day of rejoicing.

When it was full day Msyamboza explained his dreams to one of his wives:

"In the night," he said, "I was greatly troubled by dreams. I dreamed that I and Masakhumbira were, as it were, on our way again yonder to Bandawe. I had taken *Ginyampheta*, my gun, and at one point where we had gone into the bush after game we found a buffalo, very fierce. At first I wounded it in the leg and it started to chase me. I did all I could to run fast but the buffalo would not give up the chase and all my running was useless; then, lo! the buffalo dis-

appeared. Now what does all that mean? It beats me!"

"Well," replied the wife, "sometimes dreams are just nothing more than the product of sleep but sometimes they are true. Had it been I who dreamed this I would have told you not to go hunting lest you actually meet that buffalo. I have had many signs through dreams. You remember that day when our child was bitten, how I had dreamed of it all. That other time when there was a death-wailing, I put the whole thing before you from dream concerning it. But you did not pay any heed to what I said. When one is warned by dream one is well advised to pay heed."

"Dreams warn and must be paid attention to," agreed Msyamboza. "Therefore I do not wish to go hunting to-day lest I just meet that buffalo. Instead, I will go to Dzoole and go into those matters about which he sent for me when I went to Bandawe." And so, on that same day, Msyamboza took men to accompany him to Mndolera, to Dzoole, and they found him at his hut among his people. At his arrival Dzoole rejoiced, greatly expecting to receive a boon from Msyamboza, and when he had given greeting he took Msyamboza to a hut by himself, spread a mat on which he might sit and made all arrangements for a great spread of food.

Then he said: "Explain now all about your journey, how you fared, and how you found everything."

"Well," said Msyamboza, "we went on that journey and returned some time ago. I did not come here quickly because, as you know, affairs of a village never cease and first one thing shows up and then another. But we travelled well, found lots of animals

and killed them without any difficulty. Yet as for what you said when you sent for me that day, I can only ask for forgiveness. We tried in every way to seek a safety-doctor at Bandawe, with chief Leza, but such a one was simply not to be found. And Leza himself told me that in his opinion the real medicine was 'school'. He said that we ought to hand over our young people to the Government Europeans and to the Mission Europeans that they might learn and, having learned, they themselves in the days to come would have the real medicine, having learned the medicine of the European. Forgive me if I say it again; there is no charm-medicine!"

Now when Dzoole heard these words his eyes blazed and his anger was great.

"Do you imagine," he cried, "that I am a child, Msyamboza, that you should so deceive me? For what purpose do you hold malice towards me? Who brought you up? Have you not grown up with me and learned to shoot with my gun, yet now seeing your village to be large you become proud and puffed up! I do not believe that you have come back without the safety-medicine, but that you actually have it and have safeguarded your own village with it. What is this 'school' that you should say it is able to help in village safety?"

To which Msyamboza replied:

"Were it possible for people to enter into each other's hearts I would have said, Enter my heart and you will find no slightest thing standing between you and me. You know that I grew up as it were in your hands and that I have done many things that brought you great happiness. But to-day alone, Chief, I have

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

done something to deceive you, have I? You must forgive me, but there must be no thinking such things of me!"

"So you wish to hoodwink me, do you?" said Dzoole. "Be silent. If you speak again I will kill you right here. Come! Get out! Be off home! You will never again come here, you liar! If this year ends without your 'knocking against a tree', then I am not Dzoole! I will kill you with the gun!"

At such evil words, Msyamboza told his people who had accompanied him that they must flee since Dzoole wished to kill him. And they took their way in deep affliction and with night falling; sleeping at a village on their way. Next day they went on to Cibanzi and arrived in safety. When there he laid before his people all that Dzoole had done and how he might have done murder, whereupon his wife reminded him of the dreams and Msyamboza realized that at times they can be true.

For a long time he remained without going to hunt, just looking after his food grounds, because he had at that time a foot pierced by a thorn and until the sore should heal he could not travel to any distance. He was expert in all pertaining to cultivation. Elsewhere here I have set out what he did in arranging irrigation water. It was he who established this and taught his people to irrigate.

At this period also, because of the ill-feeling with Dzoole, Msyamboza sent back those many cattle which Dzoole had put in his care because of the bond of affection between them. And it was a very long time that went by without any kind of intercourse between them; either of visits or of hospitality.

## Chapter Four

### THE COMING OF THE SCHOOL

ALL these things having taken place and some time having passed, Msyamboza called his wife and said:

"I wish you, Mwambandiwe, to come with me to *Msitu-wa-Nthuru*. Bring food to eat on the way."

And Mwambandiwe said:

"What will we do at *Msitu-wa-Nthuru*? Why do you not rest occasionally at home? Do you not know that the sun is not good for people's health? You make me wonder! What can we get at that place?"

To which Msyamboza replied:

"I wish to get a school so that it may come here to the village. Since I was at Bandawe I have wished for this in order that many people may find benefit."

"Even if you get this 'school', will your people be happy with it?" asked the wife. "We do not want you to bring anything that will cause trouble to people, or destroy our children by witchcraft. Have a care! You yourself may be bewitched!"

"Well," replied her husband, "all here have already heard about school because I explained it to them when we met the other day and there need be no anxiety on that score."

So Mwambandiwe got their food ready and placed it in little baskets; flour and cooked flesh. She also took some roasted groundnuts. And then Msyamboza



called up some men to accompany him, and one or two women to go with them on this visit to *Msitu-wa-Nthuru* to beg for school. They travelled comfortably and passed on beyond the place so named in order to come where this first European was. On the way they made inquiry from some people and heard that his name was Msiti Buleke (Mr. Blake); they also heard that the name given to him by the people was *Gimutudulani*,<sup>1</sup> which knowledge they were glad to have, and when they arrived they asked a young fellow if he would call the European for them.

"Just wait a little," he said, "for the European takes a short rest." So they waited in the shade of a tree ready to meet the European. Thus when he emerged Msyamboza immediately greeted him and the white man responded, asking whence they had come.

"Our party," said Msyamboza, "has come from Cibanzi; no great distance, indeed near enough for us, if we wish, to return the same day, to get home while the sun is still up."

"What then is your name?" asked Mr. Blake.

"I am Msyamboza, chief of Cibanzi: see here my people who are with me."

"So!" said the European. "You are a chief then? Excellent. I am indeed happy to see you, Msyamboza, and I would like that we might have a talk on certain things."

Just then the wife of Mr. Blake appeared and he explained to her about Msyamboza. She, too, then gave greeting and thereafter they made ready a place

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.* "Cut off the Big Head", the reason behind this nickname is not now known.

## THE COMING OF THE SCHOOL

where they might discuss the purpose of Msyamboza's coming, and Mr. Blake asked:

"What now is it which you have sought, coming here?" and Msyamboza replied:

"Some months have passed now since a time when I went to Bandawe and heard from the European there that you had come here for the beginnings of the work of school and of the Words of God; he told me that if I myself wanted a school I should come to you here and ask. So that is the cause of my coming; there are many young men at our place and it is my wish that all the children be learned. As to what you may say about giving me such a school, that is what I am here to learn. One further thing is that when I went yonder I had taken certain of the young men and might have left them there to learn, but if you allow them to come here to learn, I shall be very happy."

"This is good," replied the missionary. "I will give you a school and you may also send some of your young men to learn here so that they, in good time, will become teachers to instruct the children of your village." And, these things being settled, Mr. Blake began to explain to Msyamboza all about their coming to the country and about the deeds of the Master, Jesus. He also began to enlighten the chief regarding human wrong-doing and how it carries people into eventual disaster; speaking also on other subjects as well and at the finish telling Msyamboza how the people who put trust in God separate one day out of seven; six days for their work, "but," said he, "on the seventh day we all just rest without putting hand to any work."

"Ah," commented Msyamboza, "what you have

said is all very good, since modes of giving honour are various. We went to Kota Kota where respect and honour is in one fashion; we have gone also among the Wiza people where the fashion is different. Thus respect and honour for God is through a special day. But one thing only puzzles me: how do you recognize the resting day? Have days got marks that one be known from another?"

"Days are known," replied Mr. Blake, "even though they have no marks. We all know the names of each and when *Sabata* comes, we rest, all of us."

"If, however, we do not know how to read or count," said Msyamboza, "how will we know that this observance is due?"<sup>1</sup>

Whereupon Mr. Blake gave him seven bits of reed, saying:

"Each day, in the morning, you must pull out one reed and when all are finished you know the resting day has come and you rest. When you have done that you should tie up the bundle again and start afresh to pull out one by one. But now, on this day, only these reeds remain tied, so take them to your village and finish them."

"That is good indeed," said Msyamboza. "When I get back home I will tell all my people that everyone must just remain without doing any work on *Sabata*. Always when I lay down any rule there is

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the word here translated "observance" is, in the original, *gule*; ordinarily considered to mean "dance", or merely "village jollification". The standard dictionary gives merely "dance with drum". Its use here, for the observance of a *sabbath*, implies that at first the gathering for worship with singing was looked upon simply as the European's equivalent for dancing.

## THE COMING OF THE SCHOOL

no-one who withstands me in what I say or expresses any will of his own."

So Mr. Blake rejoiced greatly to see the first chief who asked for school in the area of the Kongwe Mission Station, and told Msyamboza much to strengthen him and lead him to receive the Kingdom that is above, saying:

"The rule of this earth here below will come to an end but the rule of Jesus will remain for ever and for all times above." And when the conversation finished, he prayed.

Then Mrs. Blake brought their food; bread and meat and rice; saying:

"Chief, eat of this food of ours which we take as you yourselves take *nsima* porridge," and Msyamboza received it and tasted it, saying:

"Where do you find food of the kind so that we too may get it for ourselves?" At which the lady smiled, saying nothing.

Following this they also received cups of tea with milk poured in, though Mwambandiwe herself refused, saying:

"I do not wish to drink the thing that comes from squeezing the udders ('breasts') of cattle; that makes me sick, I do not like it." But Msyamboza said:

"These things for food please me very much. When I get home the young people must press out for me the milk of the cows so that I may drink it always. I would just ask you to teach me how they should do it."

Then, when they had done all this, farewells were made and Mr. Blake presented some cloth, some salt and certain fruits, along with metal pieces, as it were

### HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

money, the name of which he said was *camkono*; and, said he:

"If you wish to buy something you should buy in our store, and these are not in use among the other Europeans." As to Msyamboza's question about the right use of milk, Mr. Blake took tea leaves and sugar and explained carefully the mode of doing in order to succeed. And from that time Msyamboza drank milk and tea for the rest of his life. If supplies ran short he would search for more and from time to time some would be presented to him by his friends, the Europeans of Mission and of Government

All the way home he rejoiced greatly at the thought of the hospitable acts of the European and going along the path he spoke recalling what the European had explained regarding God's Words. Next day, when they were back at home, he gathered all the people and said:

"All of you, my people, I wish you to know that I have gone and taken 'school' from the Mission European whose name is Msiti Buleke, another name being *Cimutudulani*; a European of free generosity such as I cannot wholly describe. Therefore when the school comes I want all to enter. Anyone who does not, let him look out for himself! Let him not imagine that he will have part or lot with me!"

On a later day he called Nsingo and Masakhumbira<sup>1</sup> and Mcirafodya (he was a man of the Cikunda people) and said:

"I want you to go to *Msitu-wa-Nthuru*, to Msiti

<sup>1</sup> This is, it will be remembered, the "one who companioned" Msyamboza as stated in the author's foreword where he thanks Masakhumbira, among others, for help given in compiling this narrative.

## THE COMING OF THE SCHOOL

Buleke, to learn school, and when you are fit you will teach your companions and all other young ones so that they may not remain ignorant.

When the three young men had agreed, Msya-mboza called Mtaya, saying:

"I wish you to accompany Nsingo and Mcirafodya and Masakhumbira to *Msitu-wa-Nihuru* that they may learn school. Go properly with them and hand them over to my friend Msiti Buleke." To which Mtaya agreed and started to go with the young men, but when at the crossing of the Lingdazi he fled back to Cibanzi with the lads because of danger. And that danger concerned two men, both Ngoni, whose names were Kafanikhale and Msakambewa.

Kafanikhale was not alone. He had with him a strong war-party of his Ngoni followers. His heart was hostile to the Europeans; "We don't want this red stuff in our land," he said, "we won't have people of that colour going here and there in our country!" Constantly he planned to exterminate the white men. For one reason, he wanted two women who were working for them to be his wives and when he saw them not available because they held fast to the Europeans he went and broke the glass windows with stones, determined to kill them. He failed, however, since death found him while as yet he had not made any actual attempt.

Msakambewa was a chief of the greatest fierceness; also an Ngoni. If any man did anything he thought wrong it was his habit to kill that man, and he had not the slightest mercy. If any wife of his erred it was his way to kill her too; not with his own hands but by those of his other wives.

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He was short and light-skinned. Always when travelling one of his wives was in front carrying shield and spears, another also behind him with shield and spears, he himself between them carrying a short staff in his hand and with the warrior's head-ring on his head. He always had his head completely shaven, and went about with his bald scalp as red as any wild animal. Those two wives were they who put to death such of their co-wives as they were commanded by Msakambewa.

He had a great number of wives. He frequently killed his children. If he heard that a wife of his had got a child he would wait for three days and on the fourth day he would go with these two wives of his and if he saw that the child was dark-skinned he was enraged and would say to the wives who accompanied him: "Away with it!" If he said that, it was sufficient, child and mother were killed on the spot. But if he found that the child was light-skinned like himself, then there was rejoicing by Msakambewa.

On the arrival of Mr. Blake with his wife and their girl-child, Msakambewa took it that the spirits of his ancestors had sent him unexpected boons and, seeing them, he rejoiced and was friendly, settling them near his own place. But he constantly annoyed Mr. Blake by saying:

"Give me your daughter to be my wife! What is it you feed her with that I have not got? Do you not feed her on milk and I have cattle in quantity, thus she will fare well with me. I wish you to be chief here!" Thus he spoke often and came to Mr. Blake's door imperiously so that time and again the European and his wife would retire into the house in fear of

## THE COMING OF THE SCHOOL

Msakambewa and his weapons, he outside insolently shouting:

"You there! Open that door!"

But one day, when saying "Give me your daughter," Mr. Blake replied to him:

"You, Msakambewa, do you know that bird which makes a nest in the thorn bush? What name do people give it?" And Msakambewa said:

"Its name is *cete*."

"Well," said Mr. Blake, "when it makes its nest, that bird, what does it do?"

"It builds close to wasps or hornets so that enemies may not take its eggs," replied Msakambewa; at which Mr. Blake laughed, as Msakambewa had not seen the point of his story; the wasps and hornets being the Government which would come to Dowa in the year 1900 and build its station and fortified place by 1903. Msakambewa would just see the first arrival, but later would be arrested at a time when he had put another wife to death and be released, but would be taken again when he murdered yet another; to be held till he died and the Europeans had peace.

So at that time when the terror of Msakambewa and Kafanikhale made Mtaya flee, he went to Msyamboza and said:

"I have come back because there are people out to kill these Europeans! Do not, for any reason, send me there ever again!" But Msyamboza called up Mkwangwanula, that Cikunda man already mentioned, and said:

"You accompany the lads to *Msitu-wa-Nthuru* and hand them over to Mr. Blake that they may learn



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school," and Mkwangwanula set off and arrived at Mr. Blake's with the lads, saying:

"Chief Msyamboza of Cibanzi has sent me to deliver to you these young men that they may commence learning the wise things you have here, according to the promise you made to him." Whereat Mr. Blake was delighted and put the young men to school to commence their education.

And Mkwangwanula returned and reported to Msyamboza regarding the lads, whereupon Msyamboza said:

"Mkwangwanula is the one who is a real man, not Mtaya: he is nothing but empty fear, a barren coward!"<sup>1</sup>

Then when the day of Sabbath came he went on to the ant-hill and called out:

"Let everyone listen and hear! This day is *Sabata*. I do not want any person to do any sort of work at all. Anyone who will do disrespect to this and disobey, it is the end of him!"

And when the command was thus given forth all in the village obeyed and there was neither pounding of flour nor carrying of firewood; just putting on pots and actual cooking only, nothing else. Everyone just went idle without knowing what the meaning of it might be.

In the year 1895 and after some time had passed since Msyamboza had been to *Msitu-wa-Nthuru*, he saw one day in the afternoon a stranger approaching

<sup>1</sup>A neat play on words, the epithet cast at Mtaya being *Kwangwala* a barren, useless bit of country, or, possibly, a cowardly crow; as set-off against the brave man's name *Mkwangwanula*, with its reversive suffix "-ula".

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him. He tried to recognize the face but did not know who it was, though to himself he said:

"This man's face looks like that of one from the Marimba country:<sup>1</sup> certainly not one of our people." So when the man had seated himself the chief greeted him and asked him whence he had come.

"I am the teacher," he replied, "sent by Mr. Blake, the head of the Mission, that I may teach school in your village. I believe that you agreed together about school some time ago."

"True indeed," said Msyamboza, "it is just as you say, Teacher. I went there to beg school. What is your name?"

"I am Andreyā Mphekerere. Among the school-children I have another name but it is just a kind of play-name."

Whereupon Msyamboza got a hut made ready for Mphekerere to go into and engaged a certain woman to cook for him. Then he went off to the top of his ant-hill and called out:

"To-morrow I wish everyone to begin to attend school,<sup>2</sup> including all you, my wives! To-morrow to school! A teacher has arrived!"

Next day the teacher sounded his horn and many people gathered to sweep a cleared space where the teacher began his teaching. He was at first perplexed because no one even knew what "reading" was, or

<sup>1</sup> *Marimba* may be taken to be the area covering Chiromo and Port Herald on the Shiré River and extending into Portuguese territory to include part at least of the Undi people's land.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase used is that which spread all over Nyasaland at first and still to some degree persists; *Kuyimba skulu*, i.e. to sing school, from the custom of opening lesson-time with singing. This brings school attendance also within the African category of *gule*: "song and dance".

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

what he meant when he said "let us revise" and other things like that. The songs, however, they learned quickly, such as *Tisekera* (we rejoice) and others. But when they got used to it all, the one they most loved was this:

Yehova is my Shepherd, I do not stray.  
He rests me in comfort; in the fresh, green pasture.  
From ancient time I have been ransomed  
(Oh! my sorrow)  
By the blood of Jesus.

And hearing lovely songs in school, the people came crowding so that Mphekerere had immense trouble in his teaching since even the old and senior men, with Msyamboza himself, were enrolled and attended.

Nor did the teacher lack food: many came with porridge, some with sweet potato, some with sugar-cane from the chief and bananas too. Mphekerere had great comfort, not hankering in memory for his home at Cihanga, because of these signs of the hospitable welcome at Cibanzi. In the village, too, he was as one of Msyamboza's counsellors, helping and teaching the chief, who, however, being already an elderly man, made little or no attainment in reading.

Then, one day, Msyamboza said to his people: "You certainly support school, my children, but when the rains come what will you do? I want you to begin to cut the grass, all you women, while the men look out other ways of working, getting poles and thatching grass, so that we may put together a big place of shelter<sup>1</sup> for the school." And everyone put a happy

<sup>1</sup> *libanda*: the airy, open-sided building so suitable for school or court-house in areas not subject to high winds.

## THE COMING OF THE SCHOOL

heart to the work and came with bundles of fibre-rope, with poles, with thatching grass and gathered all together so that on a day they commenced the building with every care. Then, when it was finished, very many agreed to make punctual attendance a rule so that if any one was late or stayed off he paid a chicken to put the matter right in the school roll-book. Each one fearing a bad name, all hastened eagerly. And one day Msyamboza arranged with his son Mtaya, later called Akim, that it was his wish whenever the teacher entered school that they should make inspection of the whole village in order to seek out any who had not gone to school. And as the report spread among other villages where so many had just no idea at all as to what school was, having heard nothing of it at any time, the people just sat in doubt and questioning. But since there was great desire to understand what the usefulness of school was, some experimented by sending their children that they, too, might learn.

Thus it was that the first school began in Kongwe district, in the half-light of ideas about right and wrong, still but dimly understood. The chief himself in calling the school had just had the object of strengthening the village against sorcery, not realizing that there were other more valuable things, but all in good time, as the days passed, he discovered other things which he had not expected. Having received the school he was happy and went about with a swelling heart at the thought of how his village would acquire fame through the Europeans and through those young men whom he had sent to the Mission Station at Kongwe.

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Then when the station school at Kongwe was closed for the resting period, Nsingo and Mcirafodya and Masakhumbira came back to Cibanzi and set about explaining to everyone all that they had seen and also all news of the troubles with the two Ngoni chiefs, Kafanikhale and Msakambewa. Everyone sat with staring eyes in wonder at what they heard, and when they saw that these other people had other customs and ways of life—such as frequent washing, combing of the hair and even cleaning teeth—they were pleased to know about it all.

And Msyamboza announced his intention to send also some of his girl children to Kongwe.

## Chapter Five

### DIFFICULTIES WITH SCHOOL

MSYAMBOZA and Mr. Blake frequently visited each Mother. Every few months the chief went to Kongwe to see the European, but he had much work in his own village, what with the school, his village affairs, his hunting and his crops and fruits. One day he called together his senior men; not just those who were old but those who had their own sections and groups within his community. And thus he spoke to them:

"You all of my senior men who are here, I have called you that we may discuss certain things and my first thing to speak of is this: You all know that school is here. This I set out to secure some considerable time ago and you know how I went to the trouble of a journey to Bandawe to speak with the Europeans there. Then also to Kongwe to have talk with this Msiti Buleke; I took the trouble of doing that. Understand that I did not do all this simply on my own account, but for the sake of my people, in accordance with the saying that you all have heard, *If you are old, hide not the shaving knife but bring it into the open so that others who are in the long-hair of mourning may be shaven.*<sup>1</sup> As you have now heard regarding this

<sup>1</sup> The meaning being that what the old have gained of experience and knowledge must be put at the disposal of those who come after them.

school, I want to go on and say how first at Bandawe, and later at Kongwe also, I heard that God forbids the worship of any sort of thing whatever apart from Himself. Even as we here, when the day of worship came, heard the instructions which Mphekerere gave, when he said, Let every person worship God, and God alone. You heard all those words, did you not, my people?"

Then said one:

"Truly all these things, hearing we heard them, but we are people who do not understand"

"Yes," replied Msyamboza, "you all agree that you heard, and now although you have not put any question to me regarding what is the reason for this talk, I myself will tell you. What I say is this: Here in our village there is school and school opposes many things. For this reason I do not wish you to have the drumming dances here in this village. The young people's games and amusements, by all means, and all the dances such as are held in the light of the sun. But I do not wish the drums and dancing of *Mzinda*.<sup>1</sup> If a person dies, people will just follow the head-shaving ceremonial at the close of mourning, but will not beat the drums. Here too, when there is the

<sup>1</sup> *Mzinda*. The periodic initiation of men to adult status in the *Vinyau* rites, with instructional seclusion, masked ceremonies strangely similar to "carnival" in Mediterranean lands, and certain temporary abrogation of community law and order. The right to hold these central Cewa ceremonies (*Dambo*) was vested in important chiefs alone and gave them status, but both Mission and Government in the early days saw only "obscenity" or "lawlessness" and so put *Mzinda* under ban as far as they could, not realizing that much of community value might be involved. Yet Msyamboza on his own initiative puts it under ban also, and it is clear that the "carnival libertinism" seemed incompatible with the new teaching.

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coming-of-age ceremony for girls, I just wish that marriage be entered upon simply, without the *mbindimbindi*<sup>1</sup> and dancing, the elder women just to give the instructions, without excitement. I want my village to be a place of calm and my call to you is just what I told you long ago and what indeed you have carried out, that this place should be kept clean swept day by day and that you should yourselves take care that even the little children go to the latrines as their elders do. Just that and nothing more!"

Then said one of the senior men:

"You have said that the drums should cease sounding at this village here; what about a wife brought here among us? Do you imagine that her people will consent to burial under these conditions? Or in the case of a girl coming of age, is it to be just the shaving ceremony? Without drum or dance? Do you do well in this, O Chief? Are you not about to unroof and pull down that which is of old, since the ceremonies are of our ancestors? We cannot quickly give assent; you will see all this when there is a death or a coming-of-age!"

Then another spoke:

"Meats are of different sorts. Some people eat pig while someone else says, I do not wish to eat pig, I wish tortoise. Some refuse goat, cow or sheep flesh, but they enjoy baboon. Does the one who eats this or that say to some other one, You must not eat that or this? Would the other obey? Ha! Since you, O Msyamboza, brought the school and it has its ways the *Mzinda* is also yours and it has ways of its own.

<sup>1</sup> *Mbindimbindi* · the small tap-drum specially used in the girls' puberty ceremonies



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That being so, you should announce that those who want the ways of the school should do so, while those who desire the ways of *Mzinda* should likewise be free to do so."

"This village is mine," replied Msyamboza, "in association with my maternal uncle, Mamba.<sup>1</sup> It is not possible for me to leap over the head of my maternal uncle, but because it was he who authorized me to deal with all things I, therefore, have the duty of making rules. My rule is this one alone, and I do not wish any departing from it, thus I can in no way permit some to take on themselves to do such-and-such while others do otherwise. No! Rather is it that every single person must now cease to have anything to do with *Mzinda* here. If I am making a mistake, it matters not!"

At this, grumbling arose among many, and there was noise of complaint as, one by one, they went out; each to his hut. And Msyamboza said to them:

"You may grumble, but now you know!"

And then, following on this, he spoke to the lads and young men, saying:

"If you wish to have your *Mzinda* dancing, you must dance in daylight that all may see." And the

<sup>1</sup> *Tsibweni* (*Sibwene*): maternal uncle; refers to the seniority of the earlier Mamba, now dead, whose successor in name and status is present among those Msyamboza is addressing and through whose influence Msyamboza came in earlier years to wield the power he now does. The word does *not* mean "elder brother" as in the accepted dictionary of the language; rather, "mother's brother" if specific kinship is in question. But it is almost certainly a word imported from the more northerly peoples of Nyasaland. In any case our author has shown in Chapter Four, Part One, that Msyamboza was sister's-son to Mamba and so the new Mamba enters into the same relationship, i.e. technically "uncle" to his own father's nephew.

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young men obeyed, so that from then until now the olden drum-ceremonies have been wholly given up at Cibanzi.

A certain number of headmen, seeing what was happening, took up the complaining and began to remove in order to live separately where their puberty and mourning ceremonies could go on. But many people became accustomed and remained where they were. If someone died they simply carried out the head-shaving ceremonial without the dancing. And indeed, before many days had passed there *was* a mourning; at Cikowa, in the village of Nyemba. A certain person, apparently in perfect health, had suddenly died, to the consternation of all and, having discovered the matter, the people had decided that ordinary mourning should take place. So they agreed together about ceremony and drumming at the mourning in order to show respect and honour to the one who had gone.

When, therefore, the relatives had come to agreement, they sent messengers among the other villages, saying: "Come, neighbours! help us to carry out the mourning dances for our departed one." And all in the surrounding communities heard the call and made preparation; both men and women too. Setting out for Cikowa certain men left the villages of Khongo and Mankhokwe and approached Cibanzi on their way, meaning to pass close by. But in the way they met a Cibanzi man named Sasisila, travelling on the path with a small book in his hands. We do not know the name of the book but we do know that he was reading it there on his way and that those men thereupon began to question Sasisila.

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"Why," they said, "do you carry that book in your hands and do not stop reading when you see us? You are fools over this school of yours!"

"How have I been made a fool?" retorted Sasisila. "Is it my book or yours? You are lying in what you say!"

"Ho!" said one. "You would start talking, would you? What do you mean giving such impertinence? If you are so foolish, people will beat you."

"Don't say, *They* will beat," answered Sasisila, "but rather, *we* will beat each other. If a man speaks of beating another, is that not really to say that there should be a trial of strength? I won't stand for that. Look out for yourselves!"

"Don't let him go!" shouted another of them. "Hit him!" and one let fly with a spear which tore the book. "That's for the books you are such fools about!"

"Ah!" said Sasisila. "So you have torn this book of mine!" And with that the fight began; whereupon some of the Cibanzi people, hearing the uproar, came running with clubs, axes and spears in their hands to get into the dispute and rescue Sasisila. Anger was great that day and there was much wounding, with blood flowing from many beaten with the clubs, until eventually the Khongo and Mankhokwe men fled and went to their headmen to report the trouble.

The following morning Msyamboza, when sitting at his door, saw Khongo and Mankhokwe with some of their people coming to speak the case.

Said Mankhokwe:

"We see our young men with many wounds and they tell us that Sasisila is the one who brought about the fighting by calling his friends to come and beat

our people. We wish you to tell us clearly the cause of this."

"I do not wish to hear any talk of this sort," replied Msyamboza, "here in my village I have long since put down behaviour like that! What about yourselves? What were you passing close to my village for? My young men did wrong, did they? But they ought to have killed someone!"

"Oh! Oh! have a care, Msyamboza," said Mankhokwe and Khongo, and Khongo added: "Did you bring this school that we should be troubled with it? Are you speaking like a real neighbour? Keep foolish speech like this for other people elsewhere!"

This enraged Msyamboza, so that he sprang up to get his gun to kill them, but some of his people took hold of him, saying:

"Forgive us! Don't do it! Are they not your own folk, Chief? And to-day there are Europeans; you will be sent to Zomba.<sup>1</sup> Be not angry!" And Khongo and Mankhokwe cleared off, going to Dzoole at Mndolera with the complaint that Msyamboza, having brought a school to Cibanzi, was causing their people much trouble.

"Look," they said, "how his people are slashing ours. We have come to complain to you, that you may help us."

"Nowadays," replied Dzoole, "I do not look favourably on Msyamboza. His rudeness and impertinence go from bad to worse. I cannot lay out all his incivility to me of recent years. But I had judged that he had given up such insolence, not realizing that he actually had been doing such things. Leave him

<sup>1</sup> Headquarters of Government; hence implying arrest and trial.

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to me! I shall punish him to the full for behaving as if this land was his; forgetting the common sort that he is!"

And then Dzoole sent a man to go and call Msyamboza.

"Tell him to make no delay and come to hear this case which his young men have involved him in!"

So on the day of the summons Msyamboza saw a man approaching, one of mature years and having in hand a bag of wild-cat skin.

"You are called to Court,"<sup>1</sup> he said. And Msyamboza, after some questions, agreed, taking with him his relative Mamba and others of his senior men to hear the case at Mndolera. Many of the heads of villages surrounding Cibanzi went with them to listen.

"To-day," they said, "they are bringing shame on Msyamboza."

But on approaching Dzoole's village Msyamboza was amazed to notice that there was no sign of the usual crowded comings and goings in the village, and on drawing nearer he saw a tent. What can this be? Whose tent is this?

He called out to a man: "Who does that tent belong to? I fear me that I have just fallen into misfortune!"

"There is a Mission European in it."

<sup>1</sup> The phrase used is *Ku Boma*, which correctly applies to Government Stations and here seems to have slipped in through, perhaps, a modern usage since the introduction of Indirect Rule, giving the Chief's Court full status as part of the official administration. *Boma* is any sort of defence enclosure, from a thorn fence to a stone or brick Fort; but a verb *Kuboma* is found, denoting the hum of a multitude of people or throb of drums. It is just possible that the noun may have been in use for Chief's Court or Council-place prior to arrival of Europeans.

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"Where has this European come from?"

"He says that he has come from Mvera, near Ciwere's place at Msangandeu. People say that he gives the name of Msiti Mali (Mr. Murray). Don't raise your voice; he will hear."

And indeed it is narrated that Mr. Murray did visit Dzoole, but we do not know what the purpose of his visit was

"Who then," asked Msyamboza, "has he come with?"

"With a soldier of Kota Kota called Cambamkuya."

So Msyamboza came to Mndolera and sat himself down on the veranda of Dzoole's hut, along with his people, awaiting the arrival of Dzoole. But before sitting down, he went to Mr. Murray's tent and said:

"Greetings, Master! And where do you live?"

"I live at Mvera," replied Murray, "what about you? Where do you live and what is your name?"

"My name is Msyamboza and I live at Cibanzi which is our village."

"I have heard for some time about Cibanzi, that it is the village which first began to receive school in Dzoole's country. Is it not so?"

"I am that very one," replied Msyamboza.

"And what," asked Mr. Murray, "do you seek here?"

"I have come here in this matter of school. Certain people are hostile to our school and now the young men of my village have had serious quarrel with certain people who support the old dances, so it is on account of this quarrel that I have been called."

"Well," said Mr. Murray, "I could wish to hear how Chief Dzoole gives judgment in this case."

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Then, the conversation over, Msyamboza took leave of the missionary and went to the veranda where Mamba and the other senior men were for the hearing of the case. They had not been kept sitting long before Dzoole came and commenced talk by inquiring how they had left things at their village, and suchlike.

This talk being finished, Dzoole called all concerned with the case and went with them to his proper talking-place (*bwalo*) for the judging of disputes and when there, said:

"You, Khongo and Mankhokwe, have put before me the fact that you have a dispute with Msyamboza. Msyamboza has now come; speak, therefore, your words."

"We," said Khongo, "saw some of our young people had been wounded on their heads. We, therefore, asked the cause and they said that it was some of Msyamboza's young ones who had cut them about. This cut us to the heart and we demand that Msyamboza be questioned, whether it was he who caused them to do this, telling Sasisila to begin it by giving us impertinence."

To this Msyamboza replied:

"I knew nothing whatever about my young people acting thus. In hearing of it, I heard that Sasisila had a book and that these people had torn it across. What makes me wonder is that they were marching so close to my village. Thus, if people concerned with the old dances came to blows with my young men it was done intentionally in order to annoy. Had it been simply the matter of the book there would not have been the free fight."

At this moment Mr. Murray arrived to listen to the

case. He had with him the big soldier who was known as Cambamkuya and Dzoole was not pleased to see these strangers. We do not know how he had in mind to give judgment to the case, but we guess that he wanted to twist it his own way. However, the judgment he gave was this—he rebuked Khongo and Mankhokwe, saying:

“Your young men did wrong in going so near Cibanzi. If they had proceeded through the bush there would have been no cause of trouble, but in tearing the book they sinned. Off you go, Khongo and Mankhokwe! You are fools to let your people involve you in error. Do not do this sort of thing again!”

But at this many of the counsellors raised outcry: “Chief Dzoole! You support Msyamboza? You have ill-judged this case. We suspect that you have received bribe from Msyamboza!” Numbers of them left in rage, along with Khongo and Mankhokwe going back home, while Msyamboza—after saluting Mr. Murray in farewell—went off rejoicing. But that year the owners of villages attached to Cibanzi—the villages of Khongo, Mankhokwe, Katsika, Nabuzi, Mujiza, Matekwe and Njiwaweye—removed themselves in order to live separately where they could conduct the old ceremonies and other things. They left for that purpose and did not return. Yet as time went on one thing and another happened at Cibanzi and the school greatly progressed. The Words of God also bore fruit. Masakhumbira was baptized at Kongwe, and was named Solomon. Mtaya became Akimu, Kunthuta became Sara, Mkonda became Jeneti, and Mtsano was baptized Mary. There was



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one other also, who received the name Josiya. Christians and members of instruction classes began to be seen

Then when further days were passed, they heard that Andreyu Mphakerere must leave Cibanzi to go to teach elsewhere. The one who entered into his place was Solomon with others of his companions who had learned with him at Kongwe. So he began his teaching at Cibanzi and raised up the school until it was very large. But there came a day when, very early in the morning, one arrived at Msyamboza's all trembling.

"*Zikomo!*" he said, and when he had entered, Msyamboza gave greeting.

"I see you!" he said. "Now for what reason do you visit me here at break of day?"

"True it is," replied the man, "that I come early, and what I wish to say needs secrecy. If your wife were to go out for a little, then perhaps indeed it might be possible to talk."

Msyamboza told the wife therefore that she should go outside, and when she had gone the man said:

"What I wish to say I shall say because I greatly love you. Had it been any ordinary man then nothing would have been heard! Not by a long way! And for this reason I speak to you alone: you must not tell another, not even your wife, you must be silent."

"Very well," assented Msyamboza, "speak on."

"At your village here," said the man, "things are not well. Those who attend school are doing evil things, chief of all there is sexual misconduct so that—will you pardon me?—this village has become bad though you yourself know nothing of it; being elderly

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you do not go about at night. Those of school are doing wrong things within the school building itself and they are such as to cause me great shame and distress. And if this sex-sinning were only being done by ordinary other folk then we might just say, What about it; but—forgive me—some of your own women are doing just this same and although Solomon knows of it he hides it from you. It is for this reason that I have come, that you must not just go on being yourself unaware. These are the things that are being done here in the village, and I have told you alone.”

Then Msyamboza was greatly angry, and in his heart sorely troubled concerning school.

“Ha!” he said within himself, “is it I who sinned in bringing school that the young folk should learn. And that these teachers and young men should bring trouble upon women in the village here?” And to the man he said:

“*Zikomo*, my man! It is right that you should make me aware of affairs in the village here. You have done well, since if a man lives by himself all he can say is, How are things going in the world outside! Go then, these things are with me. I will discover the one who was the beginner of them.” So Msyamboza called up Solomon Masakhumbira and said:

“Solomon, I want to know just how the school is going here since you well know that I am he whose task is the hearing of disputes and giving decisions in all cases, but not the attending of school or always being present at the gatherings for prayer. These are your task; with the women and the young folk.”

“You ask,” said Solomon, “and that is good and right. In these days those at school are more than at

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any previous time and very many have learned to read. I could covet it, Chief, if you could come and see how these young ones of yours read."

"What about any other matters regarding school?" Msyamboza asked.

"No," replied Solomon, "there is nothing more; had there been I would assuredly have informed you earlier."

"When I go travelling," said Msyamboza, "though it be far, I have my trust in the fact that there at the village I have left Solomon and in the knowledge that you are my much-loved relative-in-marriage.<sup>1</sup> Now how is it that you hide from me things being done at the village here, not disclosing them that I also be aware? Now you are truly kin to me and yet you allow women to do wrong things there in the school with you present! What sort of behaviour is this, Solomon? Yes, and whom should I trust; hearing as I do from others? This is great wrong and you must know that you are shaming the village. Did I not bring school for you that you might learn! If this is what is going on, then I shall take this school away from you that you may wither and go dry!"

"Chief Msyamboza," replied Solomon, "every

<sup>1</sup> The word used is *Mlamu*, the dictionary meaning of which is "brother-in-law", but it will be remembered that Masakhumbira (Solomon) was the lad whom the chief would gladly have left at Bandawe for instruction had it not been that he was the son of an *ntengwa* woman: one "brought in" to the Cibanzi community and therefore not a sister or sister's daughter, one therefore who had to be given special consideration as belonging to another group in the chief's care. Her son cannot be either "son" or "maternal nephew" to Msyamboza; or "brother-in-law" as we understand the phrase. I therefore use "relative-in-marriage" in absence of any phrase more closely applicable without causing confusion by use of inexact European terms.

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word you have said is nothing but entire falsehood; without anything approaching reality! The lying of that person! Who is the one who so slanders the school? that it is a place of adultery? No! No! You must not say so, believing some other rather than me! You know that I went to Bandawe with you to seek for this school; everywhere you go you have me with you. So how is it possible that you trust to another? You yourself, have you not every now and again joined in worship and at times entered in with your people to the school and have you seen anything of this evil behaviour that you speak of? This person will bring the village to ruin; just as if people were to be slain here!"

Msyamboza listened to Solomon's words and then spoke.

"As you assert that the person who told all this to me is a liar but you yourself speak truth, I say, Very well! We shall see; *the days will name the 'buthu'*."<sup>1</sup>

Actually in his heart Msyamboza did not believe what Solomon had said, and considered him to have spoken falsely, but thought, I will myself put my hands on whether there are evils in the school or whether it is all just lies. So he just said to Solomon:

"Very well; I was anxious to hear such words; you may go!"

His mind was somewhat shaken, and he pondered much over the school but found himself unable to do anything. One thing alone he did do and that was to get in proper repair his long spears, those of the kind

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, when a girl-child is born people at first say *buthu*, she is a seed, but when she begins to grow they begin to say *NaMbeue* or *NaPhiri*, a Mbewe or a Phiri woman. In other words, Time will show.

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used by people when they killed cattle, and he did this carefully because they had become rusty and blunt. He also put in order that shield of his which he had taken long previously from the Ngoni, and wherever he went now he took them with him. He became very easily angered at this time (and I guess that any little thing gave him annoyance easily), moving about the village as if looking for someone to attack—also, not now favouring the school of the Europeans but intent rather on his own ends.

From that time onwards, whenever school was in progress, Msyamboza did not shut it down but went himself each day; not actually to enter in himself but just to sit on the school veranda with clubs and spears and his shield, keeping his eyes constantly on the teacher. At worship times, his eye was on him attentively. When he taught the people to read, then also the eye was fixed upon him. At night, if the young lads were noisy in their talk, Msyamboza went about in close proximity, to hear anything they were discussing; touching talk of wrong-doing in connection with the school, or otherwise. Women smiled, "*He hede!* Are they not all alike? Always spying and eavesdropping!" But, doing this, whenever Msyamboza heard people discussing anything undesirable, next day he laid down the law to his people, climbing the ant-hill in the dark and saying:

"In this village I do not want such-and-such. Anyone doing so-and-so I have no use for!"

Many could not understand how the chief came to know about the wrong things he was always rebuking. They were surprised to find that he knew every complaint they might have, and to discover also

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that he gave heed to their wishes. Indeed it was perfectly true that Msyamboza began to know all the doings of his people very thoroughly; their misdeeds and also the things which many were interested in. Thus he made many very good rules and instructions.

One such which he had always pronounced to his people was:

"Everyone must sweep clean each day, both before the hut and in the hut." But another now was:

"If a person dies, I do not wish ever to see the hut left to decay, but let it be taken away, its site swept clean, so that someone else may build his hut just there." And another:

"I do not wish any more taking of a wife away.<sup>1</sup> I will not permit any man from any other place to take any woman of Cibanzi away to his place." There was, of course, also the command that if he said anything no man might dispute it.

All were urged to attend to their food-grounds, and doing all these things still he went on going to the school-house; it had by now become an accustomed thing. But one day when he came back from the school he said to one of his wives:

"You know these wrong things which we do, we do because of our human wrongness. These words I heard at the school and they are very frightening. If it had not been for all this marrying of wives I might have followed Jesus, but it cannot be helped! Up above there, if my children enter in, they may make a place ready for me." To which his wife said:

"You certainly would not be able to enter the Christian company, being tied to many wives."

<sup>1</sup> *Chitengwa*, see footnote p. 104.

## Chapter Six

### A BOND OF BROTHERHOOD WITH MR. BLAKE

MANY months, indeed years, passed, and the village of Cibanzi went on growing, because people bore more children and numbers increased so that it was not noticeable when some left to live in other villages; their absence seemed to make no difference. And Msyamboza was happy to see his people so very many. As to members of the Church, there was real increase and into the work of teaching many also entered. There was some praise and flattery given to ancient ways at which when we of to-day hear of them we certainly smile, but to the people of those days these things meant honour and wealth.

If we look at their manner of dress we see them now wearing cloth and garments sewed by hand as they were taught by the lady teachers in school and by other Europeans. They put on first a cloth and above it a belt of banana bark under which they kept a pouch of snuff at their waist. If in addition to all this one wore a shirt he was considered wealthy indeed. The Cibanzi people were noticeably different from those of other villages in this matter of their dress. Many ceased to wear skins as those of other villages did. And when they beat out and washed their clothes, both men and women, words fail me! There was no soap as there is to-day. Only the great ones and very

rich would occasionally see some soap but the majority did their washing and beating with certain vegetable growths, such as *cikumba-nguruwe*, *mbwazi*, *cipuzi*, *cewe*, or even with maize-husk. Many people envied the young women of Cibanzi.

Other villagers were all wearers of skins only, and when they met anyone wearing sewed garments they fled, taking him to be an enemy; a Government policeman or clerk. Anyone on the road seeing, even far off, one approaching dressed in sewed garments, fled at once in dread. But fear did not disturb the Cibanzi people; they were accustomed to both Government and Mission people, being familiar with them, even as, for example, with Mr. Swann, as you have heard. Furthermore, the police did not commit any deed at Cibanzi to trouble the people but came there in mutual respect. So much so that many took for granted that Msyamboza had got powerful "medicine" for village safety since many things that happened in other villages did not happen in Cibanzi. A further point was that Msyamboza's people as a whole were becoming learned, steadily applying themselves to what they were taught and also very well off in material possessions.

On a certain day, when many were engaged in talk at the village Talking-place, they saw some men bearing loads coming into the village. When these reached the chief's hut they announced that the mission European was approaching and that they desired a place on which to put up his tent and a place for cooking. Msyamboza rose and pointed out a place; then began to talk with them as they went about this work of theirs. Almost immediately, noise was heard



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and the women commenced their *lulutiya*, or welcoming cries.

"Oh, people! here is the European! Come and let us sing to lighten his weariness!" And all, men and women, hurried to the village entrance to meet this European and sing him in. So came Mr. Blake to Cibanzi and inspected all the village before going to the tent.

Having rested and eaten he told the teacher who was then there to sound the horn.

"I wish you to begin now to go in to school." So the horn sounded and the people crowded in, along with Mr. Blake, who rejoiced to see the neatness of the school, the cleanliness of lads and teacher; also to note the beautiful tidiness of the village as a whole. When he had finished he went to his tent, sat on a chair and told a man to go to Msyamboza and say that he wished to talk with him now. And, when the chief came, Mr. Blake said:

"What sort of people are you that you so differ from those of other villages? Are you Ngoni? Or what tribe are you?"

"We are not Ngoni," said Msyamboza, "but lake folk who came from the lake and thus we are *Cewa*. Others I have settled who belong elsewhere, but all are now counted as *Cewa*."

"How many years is it that you have been settled here?" asked Mr. Blake.

"Do I understand about 'years'?" answered Msyamboza. "But I can tell you that children born here have now got children of their own. It is an old village."

Mr. Blake was very glad indeed at seeing the chief

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and noting all his doings. They had great talk, partly on this and that among ordinary affairs and partly on the things of the spirit. Then they went off to sleep. When it was light Msyamboza went to Mr. Blake's tent to say good morning, and the European said:

"From to-day you and I are in ties of brotherhood," taking some cloth and also some salt to present to Msyamboza; praising also very highly the matter of the school. Then he took farewell, with the words:

"I now go home; you will take all care of this school of yours." Whereupon Msyamboza said to some of his people:

"Fetch two goats and present them to the Bwana, who is setting off now." So Mr Blake accepted the goats and went home to Kongwe.

Some days later, after doing a lot of different bits of work, Msyamboza had gone to the water for a thorough wash and had just returned to the village. He had drunk some milk and then gone to the Talking-place where the men were busy shaping and smoothing hoe-handles,<sup>1</sup> when there appeared one running with sweat. On being questioned, the man said:

"The day before yesterday I went to a beer-drinking and when I got to the place at night I found something terrifying! Nothing more nor less than Government Europeans arrived at Dowa, to remain in our land!"

"Oh," exclaimed one of the men, "so the Euro-

<sup>1</sup> About October or November when, each year, all work preparatory to a new hoeing and planting season is done, awaiting the onset of the rains. It is this annual task which has given to the language one of its words which we translate "year"; the word "hoe-handle"!

peans have begun to come out from Kota Kota in order to live here in our country! Alas, now the land is spoiled! We shall no longer find room to stretch! We shall be shut in!" And another said:

"Are they at Kota Kota only? Are they not at Cimutu and at Ciwamba? You can just take it now that our land is finished. In the past it has given us all our sustenance but now that is all done with!"

Then said Msyamboza:

"These Europeans of the Government are not our enemies desiring to seize our country, but they wish to guard and protect us. If you want to find the good in the Europeans you should go and be written on, some of you, as soldiers (police-force). So long as you go in fear so that you refuse contact with Europeans, you will be holding them as if they were your enemies." And in a day or two it was found that the rumour was true. The government came to Dowa and very many of the people were put in the way of employment and money earning. When they got accustomed to money they recognized that it was a thing to be desired.

A year or two later, as men were in discussion at the Talking-place, there came to them one of the lads of the village who had gone some days earlier to another village to a mourning. Said he:

"People must cease raising strife nowadays. What I heard there at the mourning was frightening enough to put a stop to quarrelsomeness."

"What sort of things did you hear?" demanded Msyamboza.

"Oh, things to make one grieve indeed. The sorrow is that Cimbanga of Mpenya village was beer-

drinking when there arrived Manjawira, who you know has entered the police-force."

"Which Manjawira?" asked Msyamboza.

"The son of Manjaake, that Ngoni who lives near Msakambewa."

"And what happened then?"

"Well," said the lad, "Manjawira said something; it may have concerned hut-tax, I do not know, but Cimbalinga immediately called to his people, 'Kill that man!' and then there was a free fight, I tell you!"

Every one heard the story in dismay.

But some time passed and Msyamboza took certain of his wives to pay a visit to his friend Mr. Blake. They carried some eggs, and took a goat and a chicken as a present for him.

They found him at home and when the two saw each other they were greatly happy and talked of many things in answer to Mr. Blake's questions. They went thoroughly into everything and then Mr. Blake said:

"I want you to go with me to see my food-ground because I have now begun to plant many kinds of seed," and off the two went. Msyamboza gazed at all the varieties of fruit and vegetable, particularly the fruit,<sup>1</sup> and said:

"What is that green thing that looks like rice?"

"Oh," said Mr. Blake, "the name of that is *trigu* (wheat). Our bread is made from the flour of wheat and if we had no wheat we could not have entirely healthy bodies."

<sup>1</sup> The word used is *jamu*, i.e. jam, and refers possibly to strawberries or other jam fruit, the product of which Msyamboza sampled and, as a result, the plant itself received the name of the product.

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"I would very much like to have this *trigu*," said Msyamboza. "If I knew how to sow it I would ask you to give me some because this bread of yours is very nice; quite different from our *nsima* (porridge) which we cannot eat without relish of some kind, or sauce."

"Well, it is easy indeed to sow wheat and if you really want to go with some to your place you may take some now and plant it."

"I do so wish," the chief replied. "I do not wish to be short of all these many things but desire all these kinds of planted things to be seen here in this land. So will you also give me the seeds of the plants that make jam?"

Then at the missionary's house Msyamboza was given food: bread and milk and various kinds of little cake foods which Mr. Blake and his wife had. And when they had slept the night, he started his journey home after receiving much wheat seed which he loaded on to the heads of his wives. Back at home he called his people together and said:

"I have returned from Kongwe with *trigu* seed and I want many who wish work in order to better themselves to sign on for this task. This food is of a most excellent kind." And many went in for this work. There were, too, certain serf-folk who had come into servitude through lack of any to aid them or through having no kin at all. All such were supported by Msyamboza and in his food-fields one could see as if it were at a European's plantation, so great were the numbers of the workers.

They hoed and sowed much wheat so that when it had ripened they cut it, threshed it, and found many

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bags filled full. The chief then went with some to Mr. Blake at Kongwe and said:

"This is the *trigu* which I have found in my fields so I have brought it that you may buy." This Mr. Blake greatly praised when he saw it, and he bought it, saying:

"Is there more at your village, or is this all?" to which Msyamboza replied:

"No, sir. I have left behind much, taller indeed in stalk than yours, and I do not know if you will buy the lot."

"Well," said Mr. Blake, "if your wheat is in such quantity I would like to tell you a wise thing, which is that you go with some of it to Mvera to sell there; take some to Mcinji, some to Fort Jameson, some to Zomba, some to Magwero and some also to Kota Kota and to Dowa, thus you will find abundant wealth."

Then Msyamboza rejoiced:

"That is indeed very good," he said, "to tell me of so many places where I can market this *trigu* year by year.<sup>1</sup> So, when they had made farewells, he went home, packed up his wheat and took it to this place and to that, along with his sweet potatoes, for sale. In describing this, a certain old man at Mvera, when he saw it, said:

"Hi! Is this that Msyamboza coming? Is it not as if a European was approaching? Potatoes! a whole procession of carriers! And bags of wheat one after another!" Anyone asking whose all these might be was told: "They belong to Msyamboza." He was a chief of substance and renown in very truth.

<sup>1</sup> The author has leaped forward in time so that four Mission Stations and three Government centres are mentioned

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So, beginning at that time and continuing during his whole life, he planted wheat in his food-grounds and marketed it with the Europeans of Government and of Mission, becoming the friend of them all so that someone made up a song:

“Cousin to the white-man is Msyamboza  
Cousin to the white-man is Msyamboza  
No chain of slavery for Msyambosa  
The white-man's cousin ”

and this song became an *ngoma*<sup>1</sup> known throughout all the land between the Linthipe and the Bua rivers.

Then, at another time, Msyamboza gave aid to Mr. Blake by going with some of his people to clear the track for a road from Kongwe to Mcinji; a road that would follow the line of the telegraph. At a certain point he met an Indian trader named Elias, from the village of Mozesi, and there saw his donkeys. Msyamboza bought one, a female, paying a cow for it and taking it home. When he arrived many were puzzled and amazed at sight of the donkey, and people from other villages kept constantly coming to see both the wheat growing and the donkey. One day, indeed, Mr. Blake came again to Cibanzi and he too was amazed to see the crops, the workers and also the donkey, saying:

<sup>1</sup> The *Ngoma* is the dry-weather, daylight dancing within the cattle-kraal which spread through the land after the Ngoni intrusion from South Africa. The soft surface in the kraal allowed for the rhythmical, often excited, stamping of the feet and the dry weather between harvest and the rains gave a period free for inter-village festivity and competition.

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"Where did you find the donkey, Chief?"

"I bought him from an Indian at the village of Mozesi; it is he who has donkeys."

"Well," said Mr. Blake, "donkeys have many uses. If you are burdened by much travelling you can get up on it. You see how the Europeans often travel in hammocks through lacking donkeys. And, later on, you will have increase"

"How that?" asked Msyamboza, "since the donkey is solitary?"

"Bring her to our place, and then come again and get her. There are plenty of males."

And with that Mr. Blake went back to Kongwe. Msyamboza sent his donkey there and thus it is that many which are now found in other villages were born and purchased at Cibanzi. This bond of brotherhood was of great gain to Msyamboza, and as long as he remained here among his people he gave all praise to Mr. Blake, saying:

"Among all these Europeans my friendship is centred on him."

It was some time after this that he found another very great good fortune. He had gone to Mr. Blake because a message had come:

"I have got a great hoe for hoeing with oxen,<sup>1</sup> and if you will give me money I will buy such a hoe for you." Very quickly Msyamboza sought out the money that Mr. Blake had mentioned and handed it

<sup>1</sup> The first introduction of the plough, of course. It was not to prove an unmixed blessing since only in certain areas was there a sufficient depth of soil, and in many places European experiment was carried out in face of criticism by the sagacious locals who knew that the depth they could go with a hoe was just as much as the land could stand. They were often proved right, but Msyamboza seems to have been fortunate



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over. The report of this great hoe spread through Cibanzi, and the eyes of many were on the path to see what this thing would be like. When it arrived at Kongwe Mr. Blake called Msyamboza:

"That great hoe I spoke about has come, that which I said you should buy; come and see it!"

So the two inspected the plough (*pularwo*, in the original) and the Bwana said:

"This cannot hoe by hand, as I told you before, but it is needful that oxen be used. Therefore I suggest that you go home and send to me here some of your bullocks that have been gelded, along with some of your young men, say two of them, so that oxen and men together may learn here; because untrained oxen cannot plough rightly."

To this Msyamboza very readily agreed and went home to Cibanzi together with his followers—since, of course, a chief of good status never travelled alone but always with some to accompany him so that enemies might not kill him. At home he explained about the plough to his people and told some of his serfs to go to Kongwe and learn how to hoe with oxen. They obeyed and took oxen with instructions to return with them and with the plough after the passing of such time as was needed for them to understand how to work with it. This was done, and when the plough arrived the people were amazed both at the sight of it and of the excellent ploughing that it did; even though, here and there, there might be the toughest of grasses or bamboo roots or such, it got them out with no difficulty at all. And the people of other villages came to see the plough continually, saying:

"Truly Msyamboza has gone on ahead."<sup>1</sup>

Causes for puzzlement and debate were now these: first the wearing of cloth where others wore skins, then the habit of washing where others went sticky and grimy, then the school when others remained in darkness not appreciating the evils of the old customs, then the attractive hymns about God where others had evil backbiting and cursing, then this marvellous plough that brought full harvest where others ever and again had famine, and finally quiet freedom where others had fear and frequent flight from police and Europeans. These things it was which gave reason for puzzlement and debate.

Msyamboza extended his ploughed ground the next year and made much money, so much so that if there had been motor cars he might have bought his own for transporting the wheat. When the work of the crop was finished he sold a great quantity but still more remained and he began to amuse himself with it, or rather, to make experiment for his own interest. Some of it he roasted and ate in that form. Some he got pounded into flour and, pouring in milk to produce a gruel, cooked it as porridge. There were others, too, who steeped it and made a ferment to be used in the light beer. And the people of the surrounding villages were very envious.

<sup>1</sup> Actually the word used, *adaptapo*, is euphemism for "he has got powerful medicine", but I use the euphemistic form to illustrate the truth of what well-informed commentators on African (or indeed any primitive) communalism have said regarding its core of social weakness, that whenever the individual showed signs of non-normal activities he, or she, was in great danger of being ostracized as "anti-social". And the step from social ostracism to an accusation of what we translate as "sorcery" was, for all common folk, almost inevitable.

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It was not long before Mr. Blake came again and set up his tent at Cibanzi. He inspected the work of the school, encouraging and stimulating the Church members and those in the instruction class; speaking also to Msyamboza that he should come to know Jesus in his own heart. But it will, of course, be remembered that the chief was still somewhat hostile to the teachers because of that false report. Then in the morning, before the European went away, they had a look at all the food-garden work, and Mr. Blake was delighted to taste tomatoes, many being presented so that he could eat them at home. Potatoes and onions he also took away in quantity, with sweet-cane, green-maize, pumpkins and jam-fruit, all in free generosity. The carriers tied everything in bundles to carry to Kongwe. Then before he departed, Mr. Blake asked:

"How do you get your wheat flour?"

"Oh," replied Msyamboza, "getting it means stiff joints! If the women begin to pound, the wheat gives great trouble because sometimes it swells and sometimes when they start it takes two days' pounding even to get it broken down. It is most vexing work."

"Well," said the European, "we too, at our place, have been much troubled in dealing with wheat; some, of course, pound it but others have ground it on a stone, until we now have found a way that is quick, grinding by a machine."

"Ah, my friend," said Msyamboza, "it is you who have the luck, that where you come from there should be those who do your flour-producing for you! Now if *we* only had machines how happy we would be!"

"Well," said the teacher, "I hear that there are

places where wheat-grinding machines can be got if you wish to buy."

"All I say," cried Msyamboza, "is, Where is this grinder? I greatly desire it. Even if they say ten cows, yet I would buy, since I would soon have back the value of ten cows!"

"The place is very far off but a grinder is there; it is at Tete (on the Zambezi) in Malirana's village. The one who owns it wants to sell it for five pounds. If that price is in your reach, give me the money and I will buy for you."

"I have that amount easily. Will you write a letter for me and I will go with it to Malirana right away myself, and with the money?"

And so the agreement was made and Mr. Blake wrote the letter, leaving it with Msyamboza and then making his farewells and departing. As for Msyamboza, he counted his money. The red ones—the pounds—were in a small pot, full. The young ones—half-sovereigns—were in another, also full. The coins of two shillings and sixpence were in an earthenware bowl and the rupces—shillings—in another pot, while the coins of just two-shillings each had another pot for themselves: all full! As to the coppers! Oh my! just beyond words! So he separated out three of the whole pounds and counted two pounds' worth of the big white ones, tying all up together, and in the morning started out for Tete.

Arrived there he came to the door of Malirana's hut with the letter stuck in a reed as was the custom in those days, in order that the messenger should not soil the letter by carrying it in his hand. At the door he coughed that Malirana might hear, being afraid to

knock. He coughed, but there was only silence. He went round the side and coughed again, but only silence; to the other side and still silence. So he said:

"I judge that Mr. Malirana is asleep, come let us rest, that we may speak with him when he comes out." And when they had waited for a time Mr. Malirana<sup>1</sup> did come and as soon as he had read the letter and counted the money he brought out the grinding-machine, and explained how it worked and handed it over to Msyamboza. *Was* he happy? Off he went with it to Cibanzı and arrived safely after days on the road. He taught some of his young men and they started grinding wheat in great quantity, making wheat porridge and other things which were sold for money. But one day a youth said to him:

"Chief, you have omitted to make bread such as these Europeans make and you only eat small quantities of porridge; yet the ways of bread-making are not difficult."

"But," said Msyamboza, "what about going to get the bread-raising medicine continually? I say that if I go to beg every other day will the bond of brotherhood hold fast?"

"I," said the lad, "know how to cook it and have made bread with this kind of flour. Heat salty water and then pour on this flour; in the morning you will find it boiled. This that has been boiled is what to knead your flour with and make it rise. We have at times made it with the froth from beer-gruel, sometimes with potato-skins—and indeed that is a really powerful bread-raising medicine."

<sup>1</sup> Probably a Portuguese under an African name, or an Arab trader. The author gives him the title *Bwana*.

"Right," said Msyamboza, "try and we will taste what it is like so as to see if you really are knowledgeable in making it."

So the lad prepared his ingredients and produced loaves that were really excellent so that when Msyamboza had eaten he said to the lad:

"From to-day I wish you to remain my cooker. Ordinary porridges I do not love since the Europeans have spoiled me,<sup>1</sup> accustoming me to eat other foods." And thus the lad entered the employ of Msyamboza, cooking his garden vegetables, his bread, his tea and his milk, as well as other things; attending to his food always. When he boiled milk, there were times when he boiled enough for a very large pot, times when there was shortage of good things to get for eating. Sugar and tea he sometimes asked for from the Europeans, and sometimes he would order and buy them.

<sup>1</sup> Actually Msyamboza says "The Europeans have killed me"; a good example of idiom which, where the language is imperfectly understood, might so easily lead to grave misapprehensions.

## Chapter Seven

### A NEW MAN

**B**EFORE we begin this chapter let us first look at this proverb: *cati deru, caopsa mlenje*, the sudden apparition frightens the hunter. The explanation is that one day some people went out hunting game with a professional hunter. They killed a lot of various sorts of game but when they went on they saw the hunter showing signs of terror, though no one else saw what had frightened him. He was used to recognizing dangerous beasts even at a distance, but it seemed that he had seen an unknown monster suddenly appear and disappear. Thus the proverb arose.

Now this saying lets us know a little concerning Msyamboza. Constantly he was in the way of hearing the Words of God, both at the school and on the days of worship; yet though he heard he did not pay any great attention, his thoughts and main interests were elsewhere, watching what was going on. But one day, as we already noticed, he came back from the school in fear since he had heard the Words of God rebuking the sins of men and speaking of the punishment of such as were not obedient. His heart was ill at ease, depressed with dread. Even though, when he came to his house, he busied himself taking stock of his cattle and all his various activities, yet he found no peace; he could not rest.

What worried him was this, that he kept on recalling

the falsehood of the man who had told him that the school was evil because people did evil things in it and that he had found this all to be lies, the teachers not deceiving or wronging the women.

"What is it," he said in his heart, "that I have found for myself? Alas, have I not just misused the time!"

It was thus he spoke to himself and, thinking over the words heard, his heart asked:

"What can I do? How can I put away some twenty wives? And what of my children? They will count me a bad man if I desert their mothers and they will not call me Father any more! Oh, sorrow without end! Even though I should leave all these women and choose only one, will my eye not still look and peer? And what about all these travellers and visitors continually coming to me? How will one wife be able to cook sufficient food? And should she die, who will I have with me?" Thus and thus he questioned himself and his heart found no way.

Remembering all that he had been taught by Mr. Blake and longing to be really one of the faith, he was sore distressed, finding no joy in life, groaning in spirit. Try as he might to think, no opening could be seen by which to enter the path of Jesus and he just concluded that thus it must remain:

"As for me I am already dead! 'This life they speak of is for others, not for us who have many wives. If a hyena falls in a game-pit he does not talk, he just says, 'I have fallen; I must just die and forget everything.' His heart becomes reconciled to his fate."

Nevertheless, though he was one of those unable to fulfil the conditions for membership of the Christian



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company, he did not give up prayer to God. He went on his knees night by night and put himself in God's hands, to show Him his faith and in order that he might understand what the Master desires. Yet, as the saying goes that all days are not good, so there came a day that was really unhappy. At night he had eaten well and sat talking till the time came for sleep. Then in the light sleep that comes about dawn he was oppressed by dreams. He dreamed that he had gone on a journey with one of his wives and that they came to a great river, broad and deep. People could not ford that river because of its volume and its rushing speed. And behind them they saw a great elephant so that they were in torment, dashing hither and thither to find a crossing-place without result. By mere good chance they saw a string, red coloured, stretched above the water, and a man who said:

"Cross over on that string there." So they made the attempt. Then he woke, shivering with fear, and aroused his wife, saying:

"Oh, Mwambandiwe! a dream has sore troubled me," thereupon describing to her what the dream had been.

"These dreams that are troubling you," she said, "are from the words that your friend Msiti Buleke speaks to you ever and again. In order that dreams should leave you, your heart must be changed in its direction."

"But," replied Msyamboza, "how can such a change of direction be, so long as they refuse a polygamist? This thing will just come back again and again until it kills me. I cannot always run. Shall I ever cease fleeing night by night before such

dreams?" Then, when they had talked for a good time, he slept again before second cock-crow and again he dreamed. He saw a long, long cord coming down from above and saw no man anywhere, yet he heard a voice saying:

"Msyamboza, take hold of this cord!" Then he tried to take hold but was unable and the cord began to go up again so that he did not see it any more. When he rose he described it all, in great perplexity, and it was only because he was a man that he was able to go about his ordinary ways, resigning himself to his fate.

After a month or two he summoned Solomon and said:

"I want you to help me in the hoeing of my maize ground because the grass has grown very long. I do not want my maize crop to be stunted." To this Solomon agreed and awaited a day to be arranged. And when the day came Msyamboza killed a goat and called others also that they might join in the hoeing along with some of his own wives. It was a great community hoeing with this song on their lips:

"Which is the little garden?  
Which is the little garden  
To which you invited me?"

and this other:

"That is the owl, which is hooting slowly.  
Throw something to him.  
That is the owl."

Msyamboza himself took a hoe and there were the

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two of them, he and Solomon together; they would hoe a little and then straighten their backs and talk, hoe a little more and straighten up for a while. The united work went with a swing with the younger men breaking the ground ahead so as to make things easier for these two, their headmen.

Later, the wives came with food (the relish being the flesh of the goat) and handed it to all the hoers that they might eat, sitting down to wait until the people should finish the meal. Msyamboza sat on the root of a tree eating his bread and drinking his milk; his beard white like the milk. Then, when food was finished, and the hoeing again begun, he said:

"If your friend says to you, Come here with that ulcer of yours that I may cover it over lest splinters pierce it, is such a man not a good man?"

"Such a man," replied Solomon, "is indeed a good man and I would know that such a one wishes me well."

"Well," went on Msyamboza, "if one refused, what reason could one have for refusal? If certain people say, Come and let us bandage up your ulcers of the heart and mind, could such, even though most loving, really help us if we persist in running away and refusing?"

"To do that," said Solomon, "would be grievous wrong. I know that I am a teacher and teach in the village, but time and again I know myself to be disobedient. What is needed is for all of us to keep in obedience to the words of Him who calls us, we ought to be ready to receive and not be stubborn. *The bone that gets stuck across the pot eventually breaks the pot.*"



"Solomon," said Msyamboza, "I know indeed that you are my close kin. Many a time you are in my thoughts yet I do not know what your thoughts are. Do you love me, Solomon?"

"Why do you speak thus, oh my chief? How is it that you seek to know whether I do or do not love you? No! No! You must not speak words to cause sorrow. At all times I love you."

"So?" said Msyamboza, "you love me? Then all is well!" And thereupon he put down his hoe, went over to the great tree against which his men had placed their bows and sticks. His gun was there and he took powder from his skin-bag, rammed it in and fired; bang! Then he cried aloud:

"I have fired this gun to-day as sign that from now onwards I shall follow Jesus! You, my wives, all of you! I put you away for Jesus' sake and I do not wish to leave out even one of you all since it is my life and your lives that are concerned. I know that you will have anxiety and sorrow but I cannot give up honouring Christ who is the Master of Life. I have no cause of any sort against you. What I do I do according to the desire of Jesus that I may receive freedom and release in my heart through his love! Farewell!"

All at the food-ground were struck with wonderment as they heard his words, and his whole appearance that day was wholly other than ordinary. People hoeing in other plots came running, imagining that the chief had shot an eland. There they came running at speed, careless of thorns and with their bark-cloth or skin clothing all flapping. For all were not wealthy in Cibanzi; some were quite poor and had just one cloth or one sewed garment and they wore

those on the Sabbath only, and when all were white and clean! On working days it was still just the bark-cloth and thus with some their cloths would last as much as nine years because of the care that they took.

"What has happened?" was the question and then they heard the story of Msyamboza having given up all his wives for the sake of Christianity. Every one, not least the older men, were struck dumb in amazement.

"What is it that Msyamboza has done? What is his idea?" The whole community was shaken. The Christians united and sang for joy that their chief had accepted Jesus.

His wives raised no grumbling at all. With one heart they said:

"We shall be taken again in marriage since we were wives to Msyamboza. Even though he divorces us because of Jesus we shall not cease to honour him and cook for his visitors. And we too will follow Jesus." Indeed these women held to their promise. Actually they did not marry again except for one who was taken in marriage by another man.

One of the teachers went quickly to Kongwe and found Mr. Blake, to whom, after greetings, he said:

"Sir! at our place something amazing has happened. Msyamboza has entered the Christian way. He has publicly declared the giving up of all those wives and herein great joy is amongst us." On hearing this with gladness, Mr. Blake explained all to his wife and there and then summoned another lady, one who was unmarried, saying, "Come, let us go to Cibanzi!" And on arrival they had an assembly. All the Christians gave praise in that God had heard

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their prayer for their chief. There was singing and the common meal amidst great rejoicing. Mr. Blake spoke long with Msyamboza, of his own love and, above all, of the heavenly Lord's love, he who is Master of life and of all that we possess. The chief himself was light and glad of heart, saying:

"I was one lost, and I have been found. I was marked for death and now I have a new life." So that when Mr. Blake left, he went away happy.

Msyamboza was now wifeless. He had one to cook for him, that lad who had learned cooking from Mrs. Blake; he it was who looked after the food and who made his tea and other things. When he travelled many accompanied him, including those who had been his wives, and all paid him every sign of respect. When travellers came as visitors, all of those women went on cooking from their own food until such time as this one or that might go off elsewhere. But one day Mr. Blake came again and had a long talk with Msyamboza. What he said was: "You cannot be without a wife to take care of you. I judge that it is right for you to choose a wife from among those whom you have given up. What do you say?"

"What you say is true," said Msyamboza. "To me also it is unfitting, because a wifeless man lives as one whose life is incomplete and not properly rounded off. So what I would say is this, that you should call a gathering of the Christians among my people that they may make choice of a wife for me. I also will make my choice and as a result we will hear which is the chosen one."

To this Mr. Blake agreed and arranged an assembly to choose a wife for the chief. So a selection was made

among the twenty-five women and a certain one was decided on. This being finished they called Msyamboza and told him that the congregation had chosen so-and-so in accordance with what they saw to be suitable.

"What," they asked, "about your choice?"

"Your choice," declared Msyamboza, "agrees with mine and I choose Mperakolira (Elizabeth) as my wife." Which being mutually agreed, Mr. Blake held a marriage ceremony and departed for Kongwe.

Following on this Msyamboza began at once to learn the Words of God with the teachers. Each day one teacher was set apart to teach the chief to read, but the plan failed; he just could not learn even the alphabet and so eventually gave up trying to learn. Learning God's Word by heart, however, was no trouble to him. Chapters 1 and 2 of the book by Matthew he committed to memory and repeated to the people without looking at the book at all. He memorized also many separate verses and came to have a great knowledge of God's Words. Learning the adults' Catechism also gave no trouble, not in the slightest, provided that there was someone who could get ready for him what he would memorize. People were amazed to see the chief's powers of memory.

Days and months passed. Msyamboza went on with his learning in this way. At times he travelled about on journeys to sell his onions, or wheat, or sweet potatoes. The wheat at Kongwe was not so popular as that of Msyamboza, and furthermore his planted ground was so large that if he had wished to cut it up into small areas such as that at Kongwe, it would perhaps have equalled some thirty such in its



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size. Thus the sustenance of the Europeans both at Kongwe Mission and at Dowa Government Station depended much on Msyamboza.

Those who speak of these things say that no day passed without mention of God in Msyamboza's talk. And there came a day when, in the midst of such talk, he saw a man arriving who had come from Kongwe. Asked what was the cause of his journey, the man said:

"The Europeans have sent to you a message that on the day when work ceases they will come here. And what they further say is that on the Sabbath they will baptize you here in your own village. They wish that you may be clearly informed of this "

"But," exclaimed Msyamboza, "is it not customary that all are baptized at Kongwe? What then is their idea in coming here?"

"Well," said the messenger, "I do not know what the reason is, but I just happened to hear that all the Europeans will come here to witness your baptism. After all, are you not in brotherhood with the Europeans?"

So when the man had gone, Msyamboza called Solomon and other seniors, saying:

"I have received a message that on the Sabbath there will be my baptism and I wish you to tell everyone that they should come to be witnesses." Whereat Solomon and his companions rejoiced and informed the teachers and all the Christians and members of the Instruction Class, together with all who were accustomed to attend the gatherings, that everyone should come to the baptism of Msyamboza.

Msyamboza himself called all the women once his wives together with his own children now married with one or two children of their own, and Elizabeth herself, saying:

"On Sabbath there will be my baptism and you know what numbers of people will gather here. If there is not enough flour prepared, then will you make search so that there may be no shame or disgrace on us. And I do not need to speak of making all huts neat and tidy. That is your affair and you yourselves know all about it."

To this all the women agreed and made arrangements for the search for flour. Many in the village came to present gifts of flour and relish; some, chicken, others, goats; all coming to rejoice the heart of Msyamboza, and saying:

"We have just heard a whisper that food will be needed here to order to cook for travellers. Forgive us, Chief; will you accept this little thing so that if, as they say, the village will be swollen with travellers, you will find at least enough to satisfy all a little!"

And Msyamboza thus received flour in great quantity. When the Saturday came the chief took his gun and killed cattle, the number of which we do not know, and many men went with their knives, some hurriedly sharpening theirs and saying:

"No doubt of meat to-day!" Small boys in crowds ran with their loincloths flying, some carrying small pots for the congealed blood that they might cook it. Altogether there was a mass of people at the place, and when Msyamboza had killed the beasts the men began the skinning. The fat! The whole breast of the animals one mass of it. A sight to make the mouth

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water! And as they skinned the senior men kept shouting:

"Stand back, you children! Get away from there! Get away!" Dogs also yapping everywhere. Until, when the skinning and cutting up was finished, they washed the intestines and the stomach and then rolled the intestines up and took all the meat to hand over at the hut of the chief's wife.

Msyamboza took so much of it and cut it up in small pieces for all his people, saying:

"Here! Is this not yours? Go and roast it! You, too, is this not for you?" and so on until he had divided out for every one. And still much meat remained. Then, even as they were all beginning to slice up their meat for roasting they heard the chorus, "We rejoice! We rejoice!" which meant that the Europeans were coming in hammocks. Girls and boys and the younger married women also ran with singing, some breaking off leaves of the *kanjedza* palm and waving them. As soon as one European arrived the young people went back again to welcome the next, until all had come who were due for the gathering. They were many, including European ladies, and probably there were some who had come from Dowa, though we do not know for certain; but at Kongwe alone there were not many white people.

So, when all had arrived, their load-men set to, putting up the tents in which the Europeans would sleep and exchanging all the news with Msyamboza and the chief women: all looking forward to the morning when they would witness the baptism of Msyamboza. He himself had little or no sleep, pondering this new thing which had been so long out

of reach. His spirit quivered with happiness and he just slept, as we say, like an over-cooked pot; which means that though one seeks sleep one starts up again wide awake and really has no proper sleep at all, just as it is with a person who knows that he will be killed in the morning. All his other interests, wealth, wheat, cattle, ivory, and so on, he remembered not at all.

So came the day of baptism. It was July 16, 1914. The horns sounded. Msyamboza washed carefully and put on his good garments, combing out also his white beard before going to the house of God. There was there that day the Minister, the Rev. Lou Hofmeyer, whom all the people named *Kwakamasi* because when he first came to Kongwe to assist there he explained to the people that he had come to help them though at his own home he had left a great congregation at Kakamasi. Before going in to the gathering he arranged things with Msyamboza:

"Since you are as the guide who caused the Good News to come here I shall bestow upon you the name of our own leader who brought the Gospel to this land of yours "

When the chief entered the House of Prayer he was placed on a seat visible to all, and his wife Elizabeth also had a seat for herself. All then came in and sat in a great silence, watching for what would be done. And then, when the European leader had completed certain teachings, he set forth the matter regarding Msyamboza.

"To-day," he said, "we all rejoice that we see a Chief of the old days, Msyamboza, who now comes as the torch giving light to this village that it may be

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Christ's. He is in our midst seeking to receive the Christian sign and he will rise now to receive baptism."

Then Msyamboza rose up, made his promises in the sight of God and laid before all the people his heart's need and search for peace. When he had ended, Mr. Hofmeyer took water, saying:

"Andrew Murray Msyamboza! I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!"

And when all the people heard that name they rejoiced. Those who were ignorant asked what the name might mean, and others explained it to them. So, when the gathering dispersed, was there not joy! Many of the Church members remained talking of Christian things and those Europeans, too, were seen speaking and discussing God's words. There was great encouragement and strengthening.

Then the women cooked much food and brought it to be divided out to all. So happy indeed were the Europeans also that they said:

"This day we do not wish to eat bread and other European things, but your food; along with you Christians here of Cibanzi."

So they gave the white folk their own large dish of maize porridge along with a pot of the cooked internal tit-bits, the liver, kidneys and such, in order that they should be pleasantly satisfied. It was a common meal indeed, and more eating than conversation! All around, the villagers themselves with such a noise of the cracking of bones! One wonders whether, once they went to rest, everyone got up next morning without feeling unwell! Only they themselves know.

## A NEW MAN

At any rate they had a feast that day and next morning dispersed.

Msyamboza was extremely happy, being baptized, and on another day he called together all those who had been his wives and said to them:

"You know that I was your husband but separated from you because of Jesus' Name and to-day I am in his peace; now why do you also not follow this way of life as I do?"

And one of the women replied:

"Listen, O our master, we quite understand that you have entered into the Christian company and have put us away. We are not at all troubled in heart nor have we any jealousy over Mperakolira, since we knew that you were in search for the way of life and we, too, will follow you indeed, to discover this life. But we will be at your call for long, we hope, in all your work." And all the women spoke in the same way, using words which gladdened the chief; then departed, each to her hut, in joy. Soon all of them had entered the Instructional Class and taken a new name.

A number of the chief's children also were baptized and to-day some are leaders in the Church's warfare; some as evangelists and teachers. It was as if Msyamboza, after baptism, set himself to heap dry wood upon a feeble fire and there were found many faithful Christians who gave real help. But of them we shall read in the next chapter.

A very good thing was that Msyamboza had happy and free relationship now with all Europeans; nothing either of fear or of anything that might cause shame. The greatest of all, however, was that he was joined

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in love to his Master, Jesus, and ceased not morning nor evening to pray that he might receive the skill of the hunter who would hunt for our Lord.

Great peace and contentment indeed! And joy among all the members of the Mission because of Msyamboza.

## Chapter Eight

### FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY

HAVING made his great change, Msyamboza gave himself wholly up to the concerns of the Christian community and its members greatly rejoiced with him in this new life. One of them, by name Andreyka Mkucha, was one day resting at the foot of a tree and began to ponder over the state of their village, Cibanzi, and of the Christian congregation amongst them. Then his thoughts began to turn to the changed heart in Msyamboza and he said to himself:

"This chief said that he had dreamed dreams and dreamed of a small red thread over a river filled with fierce water. Had it not been for that little thread where would the chief have made a crossing?"

He thought of many things and realized that when people die those who are Christian are taken over the river of death by Jesus, who goes on with them to the Great Father where there are places ready for those who are his. But people who are not believers are left behind there on their own side where are found evil wild things which destroy their lives and cause the very memory of them to vanish. A thrill ran through him and into his mind there began to come a song from his thoughts and his anxieties. As he thought, the words began to come thus:



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"Let us sing praise and glory to God, our  
good God,  
Since he has such love to us, dwellers here  
on earth,  
That He has sent His Son, beloved of old,  
To teach us all belonging to that Love.

"He is a God of mercy and will accept  
All who bring wrong doings into the open  
and join Jesus in love.  
Let us then follow His path, narrow and  
small;  
He will follow us up and bring us into the  
land above.

"At the crossing of death's river the hand of  
the Lord takes hold;  
And if we were doers of His works He will  
give us a crown  
Where there are no troubles, no tears, no  
wailing;  
And we shall praise and praise Him with-  
out end."

Andreya tried over this song by himself and found that it sounded well indeed, so he called one of the teachers, Joshua, and said:

"I have made up<sup>1</sup> a song and I want you to help me."

Then the two of them sang the hymn and when they knew it well they called all the Christians and Class members and began to teach it to them and to

<sup>1</sup> The word used, *kupeka*, is the same as that for the twisting of a grass bracelet or similar intertwining action.

## FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY

Msyamboza himself. They all loved this song. Parts of its verses were sung low and quietly and it was extremely beautiful. Even to this day it is much sung in the churches and other places of meeting. Its fame was heard afar and the Europeans called Andreyo to Kongwe and told him that they wished to hear the Cibanzi hymn. When he had sung it, Dona Albertyn arranged its words to sol-fa music <sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere we have spoken about the chief, regarding his own situation—that he was unable to read even a little. Yet though this was so, he taught his people. First of all he aided all who had been his wives so that they might accept Jesus, follow him and receive the Christian teaching. Then, further, he was in the way of teaching anyone at all at any time should they meet on the path or in the village. And then one day, the head teacher came to Msyamboza and said:

“Chief, I would like you to teach about the Words of God on his day in the house of meeting.”

Msyamboza agreed, saying:

“All right! I will speak as you say: I cannot refuse, even though I am unable to read. Our old people had a saying, *To refuse to wash clothes for older people means that they do not wash properly.* And he then went to one of his grandchildren,<sup>2</sup> named Wilibezzi Ciwambo, and made certain careful arrangements with him.

When the day came very many gathered to hear the Words of God as was their custom always. Then

<sup>1</sup> *anakonza liu lace m'mado-do-do* arranged its words to “do.”

<sup>2</sup> *mdzukululu*, a relationship implying “one of those upon whom falls the duty of burying”, and specially applicable to grandsons.

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Msyamboza rose and prayed. When he had prayed, he said:

"Come now, let us sing the hymn *There is a full Fountain*, and Wilibezi announced the number of the hymn and read over its words. Whereupon all rose up and sang. When they had sung Msyamboza rose and prayed with great power, speaking of many things in the presence of God, and when finished, he said:

"We want now to hear those Words of God which say, *That house fell which was not strongly founded upon a rock*," and Wilibezi said "Matthew chapter seven, verse twenty-four" and, when the people had got the place, he read the passage.

Then Msyamboza began to teach, saying:

"We people, if we do unworthy things are just like this man who built a house for himself on sand. Look at me. In the past I was an evil man; I used to kill in cold blood my children whose upper teeth came first. Also I was a man who plotted and lay in wait to kill people without cause, and as for killing in quarrels! All my work, too, has been in matters concerned with finding wealth for myself; and yet all is of no account whatever, the one real thing is to become a follower of Jesus. This is building on rock, but if we cling on to wrong ways of life, truly we go astray; we build our houses on sand "

Then, when he had finished recounting this and that from the past, he prayed again and said:

"Now we would like to sing the hymn which says:

"Return, you wanderers! the Father calls.  
You must not stray nor fall into affliction!  
Return! Return!"

## FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY

and Wilibezi said: "That is hymn seventy-nine."

So they sang and ended and came out.

This was the sort of teaching that Msyamboza used. He was short in size but he had a strong voice with words which pierced people to the heart. Thus he had no shyness about rebuking Christians or catechumens, and even evangelists or pastors, telling them of faults and how to do the right. Thus we hold him to have been as an evangelist really should be. His people were good singers since a number knew the hymns of Sankey. Some of these they got at Livingstonia<sup>1</sup> and other people got some elsewhere. The point is that they got them and sang them, so that it was said, "That's the Cibanzi way!"

Of course there was a busy time in the midst of the wheat season and Msyamboza was not much seen about the village because of the marketing of the crop. When he came to any village he never ate the ordinary porridge foods but travelled with carriers who bore his bundles and his own kinds of food. If he came to the Europeans of Government or Mission, he ate with them and slept in a hut given to him to sleep in. He had thus great pride in the quantity of wheat he grew.

When the chief first got the seeds of oranges from Kongwe he called all the people together and said:

"Listen, all of you! I have come with oranges from my friend and these are seeds of a fruit excellent for the cooling of the throat. When you eat it you

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Mission Training Centre near the north end of the Lake, to which in the earlier period teachers and evangelists were sent by the South African Dutch Mission until the opening of their own Training Centre at Mvera.

have an agreeable bitterness in the swallowing and I wish you to plant these seeds; we do not want some to have these fruits and others to covet them, which would be real sin."

At which one man said:

"We have heard that oranges are good. Can you not let us first taste so that we may feel what their goodness is? Otherwise we shall be planting without knowing what it is we are planting. What about those who do not like them?" And Msyamboza laughed:

"Have I brought oranges enough for all you people? That was more than I could do and if I say to you that they are good you must just trust me that I am saying what is true!"

So everyone agreed with what the chief said and began to receive orange seeds, planting them as he himself explained that they ought to be planted. Thus even to-day, should you come to Cibanzi, you would eat these fruits. He planted also the castor-oil bean, so that he might begin to make soap himself, just as some lad taught him at Kongwe from the castor oil and other fats: and he sold it.

There was one teacher who stayed for a time at Cibanzi and he said:

"Am I seeking a wife in Cibanzi? Not I! Any man coming here from some other place finds himself a sluggard, as it were, and does not have a good time; his neighbours just ridicule him constantly. I tell you its people amaze me with their energy and diligence. They oil themselves from the castor-plant and when they take water from the stream they even water the castor-oil plants too!"

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Nowadays some of the people are trying to plant trees such as have use in hut-building since they see that the woods are disappearing. In the old days there was no concern or forward-looking that timber could possibly come to an end, because it was so plentiful.

A further cause of great amazement is the things which began to be found at Cibanzi. Sieves for flour-sifting, unknown elsewhere, were seen at Cibanzi, with the women busy using them. And while women generally had not taken to singing as they pounded their maize (a custom taken from journeys into the Nsenga country) the Cibanzi women had for some time established the singing habit at times of pounding. Then when the land of Rhodesia became known there were some men who went and got much wealth, returning home with it so that many, and especially their relatives, came to count on receiving their share.

One day, indeed, there arrived one who had come from Rhodesia and he came to the hut of Msyamboza, as was the way on arrival; to meet with the chief so that he could explain all village affairs good or bad. Then after some rest the man went to his hut and took a blanket which he presented to Msyamboza and other possessions he divided out among relatives, with some for his wife. This man was greatly praised for his generosity and many felt great envy of the clothes he had. Money, too, was not lacking to him, and he wore his clothes ostentatiously, rather as the Indian traders do; wearing, for example, three loin-cloths at once with each showing its fringe of differing colour, but with the white one above the others.

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And attached to his belt was a ring of keys, jangling as he walked.

As I say, this man was greatly praised because of all that he had acquired, and many from Cibanzi started going to Rhodesia. But Msyamboza strove hard to restrain them, that they might content themselves at home and put strength into hoeing and planting. Wealth in the old days was of certain kinds and nowadays it is of other kinds. Nowadays any man, even one who is no great worker, can go to Rhodesia and when he returns he will come with a box. If we look inside we will find blankets, a pair of shorts, and a special outfit to dress in for dance or for coming-of-age ceremonies. And what will he say on his return? He says:

"All my money has been spent on the road and I have debts owing to those who were my companions; will you sell a cow so that I can repay my debts." The wealth from Rhodesia does not last long!

There was, however, one further real fruit of Christianity and that was the freedom of hospitality within the village and particularly seen in the chief himself. If travellers came they were bountifully received by Msyamboza and in the evening he would begin to teach about the Words of God that each traveller, should he be one who was ignorant about God, might truly hear and that for him there be the choice of contrition and repentance. Through this his own children were changed in their hearts and followed Jesus, but it was not only children of his own who were instructed, there were very many of the villagers also. It is said that there may have been perhaps three or four only who refused to listen, but

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the village as a whole heard God's Word and there were those who, being baptized and receiving Christian names, themselves preached and were, so to speak, evangelists.



## Chapter Nine

### MSYAMBOZA'S RECORD OF CO-OPERATION

ONE day in 1914 a number of men were busy over a game of *ncuwva*<sup>1</sup> at the Talking-place when there arrived one who burst out:

"You people have no idea what is happening! I have heard terrifying things to-day! It is said that there is war at Karonga and that people are being seized to be sent there. I do not know what we will do. I think this will be a season of eating maize-husks and who knows if we shall see another crop of green maize again!"

All were startled.

"Ah! did not those Europeans make us stop fighting and now they want war once more! What is this fighting about? And if we begin again to take our bows to fight with, are those accustomed to rifles not able to shoot far better?"

But Msyamboza said: "Don't be downhearted! Even in our old wars it was not everyone who died in fighting. If you are afraid I myself will give you the lead." Thus when the news came of the carrier transport service—since at that time there were no motor vehicles for carrying loads and food—he called his people and said:

<sup>1</sup> The game played with small stones in a series of holes in the ground, or in the Coast areas with seeds on a board having carved hollows, widely distributed under various names throughout Africa.

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"I wish some men to go to help this carrier work with the loads at Karonga,<sup>1</sup> because I do not want to have my people cowards."

The people, therefore, under this appeal gave themselves in numbers for enrolment in the Carrier Transport and were sent to Dowa accompanied by their chief, who announced:

"Are these not my people? I wish them to go to this load-carrying."

He had friendly talk with the Government soldiers and clerks who were writing the names of carriers, and said:

"I wish that if you seek people to help, you should make proper arrangement with me so that I may send such as will present themselves without fail."

Thus there were very good relations between the Government staff and Msyamboza. Later on he, of his own free will, despatched others; without being asked either by Government or by anyone else.

In other villages where the people had not been well instructed, whenever any rumour was heard they would creep away and dig out hiding-places for themselves and keep fires going all night in their fear. If they saw anyone in white or khaki clothes it was just "War has come!" and off they ran. At the sight of anything like a red fez the flight was helter-skelter, believe me! But at Cibanzi the people slept comfortably in their homes. Should a man be needed—or, say, five—Msyamboza would be asked: "Can you

<sup>1</sup> The frontier between Nyasaland and German East Africa lay a few miles beyond Karonga at the north end of Nyasa. From the outbreak of war in August 1914 until spring of 1916 all border operations were based upon Karonga so far as the Nyasaland Field Force was concerned.

give us so many?" and he had already come to agreement with his people. If they want so many then let individuals volunteer themselves, saying, "I agree", and the next "I also wish to go". Time and again, the soldiers sought at Cibanzi those who would aid them in their search, whereas, coming to some other chief who would say "Go to that hut, and that one, and that other one, but do not say anything about my telling you", they just took such people by seizing them.

The Cibanzi people, however, went on with their cultivation in comfort owing to the wisdom of their chief in being on good terms with the police and soldiers; helping of his own free will. His people had nothing to fear and went about their concerns at ease.

In this is seen one example of Msyamboza's co-operation.

At another period there was a great misfortune. This was that many in some parts had not been able to hoe their food-grounds properly and their maize withered while still in the sheaths, without opening out as it should.

"What shall we do?" said one to another as they tried here and there to get food. Some went off here or there announcing:

"We want to work for maize, because we are destitute," and people gave to them provided they did work worthy of it. So they got their bags filled from the maize of the previous year's crop.

In some places, however, they found rudeness and conceit; people saying:

"Did you not see rain at your place that you should come here asking for food? Where did you hoe?"

## MSYAMBOZA'S RECORD OF CO-OPERATION

And some even tossed money scornfully among the maize, saying:

"Now let us look and see which the fowls will choose. The maize or the money!"

The poor folk would just stand silent, without a word. Within themselves they thought:

"If it had been laziness we might have let them know that we certainly would not repeat this again, but it is sheer destitution! Alas! There it is! We can do nothing!"

When the rains came that year the hunger grew terrible. If people saw anyone pounding maize before a hut they would go about stooping for the husks just like birds, and if one should be seen cooking porridge and eat, was there not despair? All grew thinner and thinner. All they had to eat was leaves and animal meat when they could get it, and grass and such like, so they wandered here or there in search but many just found nothing. Some died as they travelled; some drowned in the course of searching. As to the aged, they were simply forgotten. Thus it came about that younger ones with strength to travel and find maize, just fed themselves without considering the health of the elderly who did not have the strength to search and find.

The planting season was a time of sheer destitution and tribulation. Some hoed by night and some by day, heedless of the heat, until at last maize began to fill out in the sheath and the people began to pluck the young cobs and devour them. As soon as the stalks began to bear, people broke off the stalks and cooked them for a meal. Then in due course the maize fields came to harvest and the people were saved.

How then had it gone at Cibanzi? Msyamboza had

two very large maize bins, one of them being of exceptionally large size requiring many supporting poles within it, and the other only a little smaller. When the time of hunger came it was these bins that were just set apart, in case people should come with empty bags and carrying hoes. Such were asked where they came from and would reply:

"We are from, (say) Mambuna, because we have heard that you have food here which people can work for; we come just for that reason alone, nothing underhand or hostile at all." And speaking thus Msyamboza would give them maize when they had hoed for the number of days equivalent. Thus, by these maize bins Msyamboza helped both his own people and those from other places, he himself eating that wheat of his, having much of it. And thereby he did a good act in helping people, in accordance with that saying of theirs, *You must never forget the person who remembered you when in trouble!* Thus people greatly praised him, this wise chief of theirs.

Once the famine was over, people put on flesh again. At first their cheeks, then on the body and lastly on legs and arms, since the human body is like the baobab tree; it does not take long to grow provided it gets nourishment.

Then came a time when a rumour of smallpox began to be heard in certain villages, and one day Msyamboza was talking with some of his people in the morning and said:

"Why do so many of the people run away from the vaccination? If it were not that the Europeans wish that we should be helped would not very many die of this disease?"

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To which a man replied :

"Things are different to-day from what they were, Chief. You see this vaccinating greatly terrifies many since a person who has been 'cut' does not have a good time, having to live solitary; and worse still, he feels bad in the body with swollen hands, yet in the old days it was quite all right "

"Why," asked Msyamboza, "do you praise the past? Don't you know that *an old chillie does not nip?*"

"True," said the man, "we know that is so; yet in the old days things were really very good. If smallpox came to a village we took the sick one and kept him by himself in comfort. Even if his relatives caught the disease yet right away we had sent young men to warn all in the surrounding villages not to come, while others closed the paths, and when we had done that we brought a medicine-man to the village for the work of safeguarding so that the smallpox might not seize many! Was that not how it was?"

"Right," said Msyamboza. "Go on! Don't stop!"

"Well," said the man, "when the safety-doctor came did he not mix his medicine gruel and before giving it to all to drink, did he not ask them to make confession! Were any guilty of adultery, or witchcraft or any sort of malice or quarrelsomeness? Or if there were any persons in possession of a good medicine for the healing of rheumatics, or chest troubles or headaches? Was it not thus, Chief? You must not praise only your Europeans "

"Go on," said Msyamboza. "I want you to speak out everything properly."

"Very good. When confession of wrong-doing was

## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

complete did he not take the medicine-gruel and commence giving it to the people so that each might taste a little, just as done in the safeguarding?<sup>1</sup> And then he warned the people with the words: Now you are clean and anyone who conducts himself wrongly will die by his own fault. Was that not how it was?"

"True indeed! I have heard all you say and I agree that it was thus that we did in previous days when smallpox came. I want now that we all remind each other, so that I may be able to succeed in showing where you are wrong."

So the man went on:

"Having done all this did the people not sweep their huts, take out all the fire-stones and the ashes, throw them away at a parting of the path and make a prohibition that no one should kill any lice, for any who did so would die from this evil air<sup>2</sup>. Was it not so? And in all this, even although the head of the community had made payment to the safety-doctor, did not many people die? Where it was found that many died was it not recognized that there must be many workers of sorcery? Now you, Chief, who praise vaccination, you know that though they vaccinate we find some people caught by the disease not-

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the little dabs of the medicine put on the trees notched during the preceding encirclement of the community's area of food grounds and water-supply. In some tribes the contents of the "horn of salvation" or "safety" was not "tasted" but was dabbed on nape of neck, thumbs and great toes of each individual, completing the primitive "Riding of the Marches".

<sup>2</sup> Lit. *mphepo* 'wind, indicating a theory of wind-borne infection perhaps. The relation between community health and the domestic fire has been discussed in many books. It may be added here that the carrying away of the fire-stones and ashes to a point where the path divided had to be done *down-wind*.

## MSYAMBOZA'S RECORD OF CO-OPERATION

withstanding the vaccination. Speak out, then, let us see who falls; *the sun scorches the tree!*"

Then replied Msyamboza:

"Very many people put their trust in things of no value; they believe that a medicine-man can aid people through his safe-guarding charms. We of Cibanzi here are accustomed to use the phrase 'things of old time' because at our village we have ceased to praise charms, yet there are many villages, even those where the smallpox is, whose people have gone in for the whole safeguarding and I ask, why is it that the people are freely dying from the smallpox? Furthermore, you are a man born not long ago, and have not seen much, but we others *have* seen how people were wiped out by smallpox in the old days. If you had seen, you would not praise the medicine-man at all, but vaccination, because it actually does help."

"I have already said that witches and death-dealers *did* die," said the man, "is it then wrong to put an end to death-dealers that the land may be cleansed and put right?"

"If anyone possesses medicine that safeguards people from death, how comes it," asked Msyamboza, "that he allows some to die? Are the sorcerers like ignorant babes? No! You must not speak as if you were people of a village that has no school. If such as you speak such things, how will others speak who have not learned wisdom?"

"Everything you have explained," replied the man, "has been clearly understood, but what I do not approve of is sending for a Government doctor to jab people with a needle every time there is smallpox? How do we know it is not just chickenpox? In any



case smallpox runs its course. When it is ended shave the heads of all. As for the dead, they just have to be mourned and buried."

"All that you say," retorted Msyamboza, "is as if it were a small child talking. What does chickenpox do? Are there not signs that it can turn into smallpox? You just want to irritate me, talking about smallpox! I have heard it all, but if *you* want people to be saved in future what is needed is for you to observe this decision of mine. Pay attention and understand all that wisdom which your books speak to you."

And then Msyamboza left the talking-place and went to his hut for his gun to go out after meat. Meanwhile the smallpox went through many villages, and one morning early Msyamboza heard a man saying:

"In my hut, the day before yesterday, my child began to be very ill, with aching joints and a body hot as fire. Looking at him to-day we are very anxious, his body has put out a rash, and so I tell you so that later on you won't laugh at me."

"There is an evil wind these days," said Msyamboza, "and I think that this may be smallpox. I want you at once to take the child out that he may be put in an isolation hut, and I will send one who knows to examine the rash, whether or not it is smallpox." And then he instructed men to put up quickly a shelter-hut such as a sick one might be placed in, and he himself went off then and there to Dowa with the news.

"Smallpox is in my village and I wish you to send someone to see it." The magistrate was glad that he had come and at once sent off his head vaccinator:

"Go to Cibanzi and vaccinate the people, for the

#### MSYAMBOZA'S RECORD OF CO-OPERATION

smallpox is there.”<sup>1</sup> And when Msyamboza got back home he gathered his people together so that the vaccinator would find them; who, when he got there, operated on all, including the chief himself. The vaccinating went off well, and not many were troubled with swollen arms. Every one watched anxiously if, perhaps, the disease would seize some other, but by great good fortune they found that it passed, with all quite well and no feverishness. The isolated came out, had their hair shaven, washed and came again within the village.

When it was all over Msyamboza had a talk with that man who had argued with him:

“Who,” he asked, “is shewn to have spoken truth in that talk we had about smallpox?”

“Forgive me, Chief,” said the man, “I did truly speak from foolishness. I now agree that vaccination and immediate report that the disease has come, are absolutely right, and many praise you that you went yourself at once to Dowa. Had it not been for your haste in calling the vaccinator we would not have got over this so quickly, and many young ones as well as older ones would have been lost.”

Thus in these three things; War service, Famine and Epidemic, Msyamboza greatly aided his people, and because of these things his people loved and praised him, giving him obedience and honour always.

He himself went on with his work at the wheat, and found good market, so that he out-did other chiefs in reputation and honour.

<sup>1</sup> It will, of course, be realized that this refers to the period following on the 1914-18 war, when medical services throughout Nyasaland were becoming established and, on the whole, welcome.

## Chapter Ten

### LAST DAYS

A YEAR or two later Msyamboza began ever and again to complain of illness. Far travel began to trouble him, and friends took to coming to see him at his own home. He moved about, of course, for short distances; not with back wholly stooping but moving shakily, being a very short man. By that time Mr. Blake had gone, and now his friend at Kongwe was Mr. Rens. The two of them had very great affection for each other. He got frequent gifts of fruit trees, particularly oranges, through this European.

One day, recognizing his inabilities, Msyamboza called together his children. When all had gathered to hear their father's words, Msyamboza said:

"My children; I have summoned you. See! in these present days I am not well; nothing but weakness! A man may at one moment say to himself, I shall be all right, yet not know that at another moment death will take him unawares. Knowing this and because of this I have called you to listen to what I would say."

"Truly, oh our Great One," said Akim, "we have heard that you wanted us, even as now we are gathered here in this hut. You have words, you say, to speak with us, and we are willing. What is in your heart to say, speak out; we listen."

Then said Mysamboza:

"The words are these, even as you yourselves know, that with many people there is hatred and contention within the family because of wealth. You know that I have cattle, and when I go, will you begin to seek out against each other poisons and witchcraft because of these cattle? I do not wish it to be thus. The Words of God forbid hatred and killing. So now I wish to portion out so that each child will receive a share of the cattle, and thus when I have departed you will just observe the ceremonies of mourning without any other thoughts of other things."

Then when Akim had assented, he took his stick and went to the kraal with his children and began to point out the cattle as he apportioned them to all. And the children showed their pleasure as each received his share.

A month or two later Msyamboza became very ill, so seriously that Mr. Rens made ready a coffin for him and instructed men to deliver it. On a day he seemed to have died, but shortly after revived. Every one was filled with grief and sympathy for their chief, and first one day and then another passed until Msyamboza was able to sit up for a little. Said he:

"I know that that coffin is for me, which you were intending to put me in, and I say that even although I am better now you must keep that coffin so that later, when I do depart, you will put me in it and in no other."

When the news of his reviving was heard by Mr. Rens he said:

"I have to be travelling among the schools just now, so if he does die while I am absent, away at some school, you must inform me there, and I shall

come to conduct the burial and mourning for this my friend."

Msyamboza grew weaker and weaker, staying wholly in the hut and not going out even to prayer on the Sabbath. But many of the Christians and teachers made a habit of going to him, sitting chatting and speaking of the things of God together. And Msyamboza said:

"I am prepared and ready to go to the Father."

Next day, Msyamboza called his wife and said:

"I want you to summon Solomon and Akim and my other children. I wish to say something to them." So Solomon and his kin heard the summons and came.

"Listen; Solomon and Akim," said Msyamboza, "you see my weakness now. In all this village we all have truly helped each other always whenever we have seen troubles, but now this burden and care will be on you two. This you know."

"Yes," replied Solomon, "yes, Chief; all that you have said we have truly heard. The words have not gone, they have entered our hearts and I promise to you that this village truly is on us."

"You know," went on Msyamboza, "that many people praise charms and spells and safeguarding medicine that their villages may be free from harm, but what is it that has safeguarded this village?"

"I know," said Solomon, "that this village has been kept safe because of the school and the Words of God. Had it not been for these two would we not long ago have been broken up through fightings or our own hatreds. Thus then I say, Thanks and praise to you, our Chief, that you brought school for us, and that we

and the young folk should learn to read and to honour God. So now that you are in weakness and weary we say, Be of quiet mind, in that you have left to us so great and good a thing."

"Since then you know," replied Msyamboza, "that this village has stood secure in the strength of the school I wish that you never throw the school away: if you throw it away you will destroy the village, but if you keep it you have kept safe this home of yours which I chose for you."

Then on other matters he spoke:

"Other words are these; since a long time, even before I was changed in heart, I gave commands to this village that I did not wish the old dances in this village, the dance ceremonies of mourning and of the girls' puberty times. I do not wish these at all and I desire that you give heed to this."

"We note all you say," said Solomon, "always if we see a trail in the dust we know that a snake is here, and if it be that kind of trail made by a bicycle we know also that a bicycle has passed by. So to-day, seeing a great Christian community, could we forget that it was you who aided us in raising up this community? Never think that! We shall labour to encourage the Christians whom you leave behind. Many we have known are dead, but all those here living we shall strive to shepherd as God gives us His grace."

And Akim also gave assent to these words, whereupon they separated, each to his house, leaving Msyamboza there in his.

Some days passed and he grew ill indeed, unable to sit up, to go out, or to walk at all. And then, one day in the year 1926, the Chief Msyamboza became des-

perately ill, spoke some words of farewell and passed.

Being dead, people prepared the body and placed it in the coffin after it had been made ready by the preacher Kumwembe, he who had charge of the congregation at Cibanzi. They then sent a letter to call Mr. Rens, saying:

"Come here for the funeral of Chief Msyamboza." But the letter did not find Mr. Rens, and thus he did not arrive for the burial day. But there came together a great concourse for the burying, so much so that there were those quite unknown as to where they had come from, and there were many faces quite unknown. There came too the Lady Missionary from the school at Kongwe; travelling in her bush-car. And the funeral was led by the Preachers, Joshua Phiri and William Kumwembe.

It was Joshua who gave the teaching from the Words of God, and he went over all the things that the chief had done; the old things of the time of darkness when he would kill people without any qualm, and those of the time of the coming of the light when he brought school from Kongwe and placed it for his people's use, and his strivings and his outstanding attempts to be a follower of his Lord, with many other such things. And then he said:

"Many Christians should follow his example and do the will of Jesus, so that at the end of their life they will be able to meet their good Chief face to face."

There was a great noise of gunfire on the burial day. Msyamboza's men fired off their guns, a symbol of honour to their chief at burial, and it was a day of awe. His men took their guns and broke them, and then buried them in the ground, because of their

## LAST DAYS

sorrow. Then when all needful at a burial was ended and darkness had fallen, the people returned home sadly, yet glad, too, in knowing that he had gone to Jesus, his Chief

Day by day during that month many came with their fowls, their flour, their goats and other things, and made gifts to the widow of Msyamboza as comfort to her as well as to all the children. The Church members also and those of the Instruction Class helped greatly with gifts of flour and fowls and money.

Mourning went on for a long time for Msyamboza because he had been such a generous chief, one never showing special favours to chosen people, a man full of laughter and merry talk. Friends from far kept on coming for months, and went to the grave which was carefully constructed within the village; mourning the chief.

At his death Msyamboza left behind him more than two hundred Christians; truly a great company. But all his other work came to a stand-still and was not carried on. No one had the heart or desire to go on planting the wheat fields. All the young people just got keen on other kinds of work and left off planting the onions, sweet potatoes and the rest. In this present time they just hoe and plant sufficient to satisfy their own need and no longer market anything.

And they divided up the chief's village; some are now in one place and some in another. There are thirty-two family groups having their own villages here or there; those remaining near now are only five, and at Cibanzi itself there are just two, that of Mamba and that of Msyamboza. But many people



## HEADMAN'S ENTERPRISE

visiting Cibanzi are in the habit of gazing at the old earthworks and enclosures.

Jesus, be my Guide

In all my way ·

You are my true Leader, keep me safe !

Yes, throughout this journey, keep me safe !

Safe in your strength.

